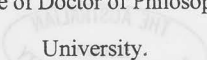


**Taking Difference Seriously: The Role of Historicity in Herbert
Marcuse's Early Philosophical Writings**

Submitted: November 1999.

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University.



Declaration

I declare that authorship of this thesis is my own and that full acknowledgment of other sources has been provided where appropriate.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Carr', is written over a horizontal line.

Michael P. Carr. November 1999.

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I would like to express my indebtedness to my teachers. In particular my supervisor, Dr David West, who has given much of his attention to the detail as well as the overall argument that is presented here. I shall always be in gratitude to Mr George Westbrook and Dr Brian Birchall who put me on the path to thinking about the issues contained in this Thesis. I would also like to thank Frances Daly for her comments and corrections to earlier drafts of this document. I would especially like to thank Cherisse Lyons without whose love and conversation I would be lost.

Abstract

This thesis starts from the position that the world is becoming increasingly characterised by terror. In Lyotard's words "Adapt your aspirations to our ends or else". In the face of such terror political theory is in crisis. It is being torn between ambiguous poles. On the one hand complete historical relativism and pragmatism reigns. On the other hand, extreme forms of deterministic naturalism deny all but the most vulgar forms of freedom. Nearly seventy years ago Herbert Marcuse addressed precisely these problems and proposed the need for a 'Concrete Philosophy'. This thesis will re-examine what will be argued is the culminating text of Marcuse's early works, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*. It will re-examine Marcuse's attempt to ground historical diversity in a transcendent criterion that enables the possibility of a life of authenticity and freedom. However, following Hegel, the transcendent criterion Marcuse proposes is itself historical. It is a synthesis of Hegel's principle of subjectivity and Heidegger's hermeneutical destruction of metaphysics.

List of Bibliographic Abbreviations

- ETW* Hegel, G.W.F. *Early Theological Writings*.
- L* Hegel, G.W.F. *The Science of Logic*.
- PhG* Hegel, G.W.F. *Phenomenology of Spirit*.
- AD* Marcuse, H. *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*.
- CRR* Marcuse, H. *Counter-Revolution and Revolt*.
- EC* Marcuse, H. *Eros and Civilization*.
- EL* Marcuse, H. *An Essay on Liberation*.
- HO* Marcuse, H. *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*.
- ODM* Marcuse, H. *One-Dimensional Man*.
- RR* Marcuse, H. *Reason and Revolution*.

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Introduction

Overview, Aims and Method of Thesis

In times which increasingly seem to be enslaved to an apotheosised market, to the process which it has become popular to refer to as globalisation, it is of little surprise that so much attention is focused upon the importance of social diversity. In the face of an extraordinarily pervasive homogenisation of political cultures many of those who value social diversity find themselves fighting a rear-guard action against what Habermas describes as the "colonisation of the life-world." Such oppositional action whether it is practical or theoretical often takes the form of defending social diversity by attacking the false universality of what have become known as meta-theories. This Thesis has much sympathy for such socio-political critique. However, the account that follows is motivated by the belief that in order to both create and preserve meaningful social diversity, to create and live lives that are meaningful, there has never been a greater need than now for taking seriously the possibility of an authentic form of ethical life that enables social diversity to flourish. As such this Thesis is concerned with approaching the following question; *Is there an ethical life-form that encompasses a universal criterion for social and political action whilst simultaneously allowing for the happening of social diversity?* This Thesis is not concerned with how such an alternative life-form would come about. Rather, it is concerned with what such an alternative socio-political life may ethically entail, and why it should be considered to be authentic. In addressing this problem I will primarily focus upon an early text of Herbert Marcuse's, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity (HO)*.

I fully recognise that the above question is a big one. In posing this question I am not seeking a single answer, but rather I wish to draw attention to its importance, and the various ways in which the question of authenticity, understood as a creative form of ethical unity, has dominated modern Continental philosophy. Indeed, the claim that the search for a self-grounded form of ethical unity dominates modern Continental philosophy is the major thesis of Habermas's lectures, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*.¹ Habermas's thesis is accepted, without argument, as the starting point of the following work. To accept this thesis is not to claim that all modern Continental philosophy is directed towards presenting such a

¹ Habermas presents this thesis primarily through the framework of the Hegelian notion of the *principle of subjectivity*, which I will return to below. J. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1990. For a statement supporting the claim that the above is the major thesis of Habermas's work see the introduction by Thomas McCarthy. pp.vii-xix. For a more recent statement of the foundational role that Hegel's principle of subjectivity has played in the discourse of modernity see,

form of ethical unity. In fact, much modern philosophy is clearly opposed to this project, for example postmodernism. But rather, it is to claim that Continental philosophy, from Hegel until the present, can not be understood outside of this discourse. Thus, to understand postmodernity it is necessary to understand modernity. The task of locating and comprehending what is involved in the discourse surrounding the notion of a self-grounded ethical criterion is, then, of considerable importance in understanding all that flows from it.

To this extent the choice of examining Herbert Marcuse's text is no coincidence. Arguably two of the most influential European philosophers of the modern period are Hegel and Heidegger. Certainly, they are two of the most influential philosophers to raise to the forefront the importance of many of the themes discussed below. As such *HO* provides a manageable way of beginning one's involvement with these two great German philosophers. Indeed, Marcuse's text offers an interpretation of two of Hegel's most significant works - *The Science of Logic (L)* and the *Phenomenology of Spirit (PhG)*. The importance of these two works in understanding the development of modern European culture is undisputed. But more than this, Marcuse interprets Hegel's thought fresh from his tutelage to Heidegger. In fact Marcuse originally intended to submit *HO* to Heidegger as his *Habilitationsschrift* sometime around 1932. Which is to say that Marcuse's work draws into the discussion another monumental philosophical text, *Being and Time*. None of this is to suggest that this Thesis is concerned with establishing founding saints. For the authority attributed to both texts and philosophers is considered within this Thesis to be derived from their ability to gather up the various aspects of philosophical discourse and present them persuasively in the context of concrete socio-political problems. To use an Hegelian expression, their authority derives from their ability to "grasp their time in thought." Nor, in naming these texts and philosophers, is it intended to enter into the vast scholarship that surrounds them. Rather, this Thesis is directed towards the specific question indicated above, and restricts its scope to Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel's ontology, an interpretation which also explicitly enquires into the relationship between authenticity, diversity and unity.

At its most general level the following study of *HO* has three purposes. First, it is intended that the study of Marcuse's text, with its specific reference to the works of both Hegel and Heidegger, will contribute to the broader discourse surrounding perhaps one of the most significant political problems of the capitalist world. It is intended that the study of this text will contribute to the discourse surrounding the annihilation, by dominant power groups, of diverse and meaningful modes of life. It will be argued in sections 1.1 to 1.3 that such annihilation is effected by withdrawing recognition of individual forms of social diversity.

Furthermore, it will be asserted that this kind of destruction through the use of political terror is pervasive. Indeed, the trivialising of meaningful modes of life by refusing to take them seriously, by refusing to extend them recognition, is now the prevailing method of overcoming political resistance. I will maintain that evidence of this kind of political thuggery occurs where ever there is an attempt to maintain genuine autonomy in opposition to the forces of global capital. On a daily basis we are able to witness the withdrawal of recognition, and the effective destruction, of such social-forms of identity as national sovereignty, indigenous peoples, trade unions, local councils, autonomous universities, independent sporting groups, families, and loved ones within families etc, etc. The following study enquires into an alternative to this kind of ethical stinginess. It enquires into the possibility of an ethical comportment which is characterised by an openness to life and a generosity of spirit.

The second general purpose that this Thesis is intended to fulfil is to re-interpret the early writings of Marcuse. That is, to re-interpret the significance of what is often referred to as Marcuse's "Heideggerian Marxist" stage from 1928 to 1933. My intention in examining what will be argued is the culminating text of this period, *HO*, is not simply to reveal the insights contained within this text, of which there are many, but to draw out the importance of the philosophical project to which Marcuse directed himself during this period. The project to which I am referring is normally considered to be Marcuse's attempted synthesis between Marx and Heidegger, what Douglas Kellner refers to as "phenomenological Marxism".² At the core of this project is Marcuse's attempt to combine phenomenology with dialectics in an attempt to create a "concrete philosophy". For Marcuse, although Marxist dialectics adequately accounts for historical change and development, it does so at the expense of what Kellner refers to as the "abiding, enduring, universal aspects of human existence".³ For Marcuse, Marxist dialectics, stripped of Hegel's Absolute, lacks the ethical foundation which its universal aspirations demand. Phenomenology, on the other hand, whilst addressing itself precisely to the issue of the essence of existence fails to adequately account for diverse historical and social change, which are the very manifestations of the kind of freedom Marcuse wishes to preserve. Marcuse's project in this period is, then, to locate an authentic form of human existence within an account of reality that is characterised by radical historical change. However, it will be argued that it was not until *HO* that Marcuse began to present a convincing foundation for this project. And even in this text, which was Marcuse's last attempt to directly address his proposed synthesis, Marcuse's offering is fragmentary. Furthermore, the philosophical possibility that Marcuse presents in *HO*, takes the form of a

² D.Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse And The Crisis Of Marxism*, Macmillan Press, London, 1984, ch.2. I will return to a more detailed discussion of the nature of Marcuse's early philosophical project in section 1.5.

³ *Ibid*, p.57.

hermeneutical re-interpretation of the development of the theory of historicity. In effect, Marcuse has shifted his attention from a synthesis of Marxian dialectics and phenomenology to a synthesis of Hegelian dialectics and Heideggerian historicity.

As will become apparent this project is directly linked to the issues raised above. It is directly linked with an account of an ethical comportment towards the world, which delights in the world, and accepts responsibility for the world, whilst at the same time recognising and taking seriously other worlds, and other subjects. I will return to the details of Marcuse's project and why a reappraisal of Marcuse is considered to be a matter of philosophical interest in section 1.4 to 1.6. Here I wish only to signal that one of the purposes of this Thesis is to re-present Marcuse's early project in a way that highlights its Heideggerian aspects rather than its Marxist aspects.

Specifically, the following re-interpretation of Marcuse's early project will involve an explication of historicity as a temporal structure which expresses itself in the fact that reality "... derives its existential forms from the past. It is further modified according to its meaning so that the present becomes the determining past for the future."⁴ This is to say, the theory of historicity rejects any suggestion that reality can be fully accounted for in terms of the present. In Heideggerian terms the past is "stretched along into" the present. In section 2.3 I shall begin a more thorough presentation of how Marcuse interprets the notion of historicity. Here it is enough to note that it is by focusing upon historicity as a fundamental characteristic of reality that the Hegelian and Heideggerian perspectives mentioned above will come to the forefront. In allowing these perspectives to emerge the following Thesis will distinguish itself from the standard works associated with Marcuse's early philosophical period that give very little attention to what Marcuse is driving at when he consistently invokes the notion of historicity.⁵ For instance, Schoolman argues that "... since Marcuse's theory of historicity maintains that all meaning, including standards of truth and validity, are formed within a historical, social context, his theory excludes a transcendental foundation for criteria of rationality"⁶. In contrast to this kind of view I will argue that it is precisely the notion of historicity, grasped as a temporal structure, that provides Marcuse with a transcendental foundation upon which to build his account of authenticity.⁷

⁴ H. Marcuse, 'Contributions to a Phenomenology of Historical Materialism', (1928), in *Telos*, Number 4, Fall, 1969, p.25.

⁵ See section 1.6

⁶ M. Schoolman, *The Imaginary Witness*, Free Press, London, 1980, p.31.

⁷ What is meant by transcendental will be addressed in section 1.4 in reference to Habermas. Here we can say the transcendental refers to that which cannot be reduced to any particular instance, hence it transcends the particular, yet it is universally present. To the extent that this was what Marcuse's early project involved see B. Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, Verso, London, 1982, pp.74ff.

The third purpose of this Thesis is both pedagogical and existential. Whilst it is hoped that the reader will take something away from their encounter with this document, the primary pedagogical effect I am referring to is contained in the writing of this Thesis. The following work is then an attempt to learn something of significance about certain aspects of German philosophy. It is an attempt to engage the thought of some great minds who have indicated alternative, indeed, revolutionary directions to those that have been followed by modern European society (i.e. capitalism). Furthermore, they have managed to do so not only by offering penetrating critiques of ethical forms of life, but also by offering powerful alternative visions to the socio-political environment they have found themselves "thrown". They have offered speculative visions of hope. However, it is no easy process to even begin to come to terms with the significance of what is articulated by such thinkers as Marcuse, Heidegger and Hegel. It is no easy process because these kind of thinkers occupy a conceptual space that is radically separated from most contemporary minds. Certainly, they occupy a conceptual space that is radically removed from the writer of this Thesis. They are of another world. Consequently, this Thesis is not an attempt to present answers, but rather to raise questions in order to begin to interpret a very different way of thinking about the world from that which predominates in contemporary society (or at the very least western capitalist societies). It is as such an introductory work, a propaedeutic for further studies.

But how then does one begin to comprehend what these kind of philosophers had to say? For even to begin to grasp their thought is complicated by the fact that Continental philosophy itself has suffered (at least in this country) terror at the hands of those who no longer take it seriously as a form of knowledge, or as a valuable social practice. Continental philosophy itself is no longer recognised as a serious concern, and as such is rarely taught as anything other than an 'interesting' or even 'amusing' way certain eccentric intellectuals mistakenly interpreted the world, and in so doing entertained themselves. For most people Continental philosophy may provide glimpses of where we have come from, or it may even encourage the development of certain forms of thought, but its substance remains fundamentally historical bunk. The triumphalism of the market place and the perspective of the disengaged self, which underpins the physical sciences, reigns supreme. What method then does one employ to overcome these difficulties? Indeed, is it possible to even begin to understand what these philosophers have to say from the perspective of suburban Australia?⁸

⁸ These questions are a reflection of the traditional problems of hermeneutics. A good account of what these problems entail is provided by D.Couzens Hoy, 'History, Historicity, and Historiography in *Being and Time*' in M.Murphy (ed.) *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1978.

One possibility is to engage in what R.G. Collingwood refers to as "imaginative expression," which is the activity by which "I constitute myself as a conscious person."⁹ It is in this regard that the pedagogical becomes the existential. Philosophy becomes transformative. In an attempt to overcome the kinds of prejudices of the above paragraph I have endeavoured, within this Thesis, to not only read philosophy but to practice philosophy (albeit at an *ab initio* level). I have endeavoured to engage in my own process of imaginative expression, a process of existential transformation, however humble this may be. Consequently, I would like to think that this Thesis has a dialectical character. The reader will find that I have continually returned to themes which were not satisfactorily expressed in earlier sections. They will also find that I have developed these themes or aspects in the writing itself. What is presented is the result of an intellectual struggle within the Thesis. It is not a survey of secondary literature. Despite attempts to smooth-out this *ab initio* presentation my labours remain apparent. Not all acts of imaginative expression are as eloquent, or as significant, as Collingwood's. Unfortunately, this is to the detriment of the reader, to whom I apologise and ask that they will persevere when confronted by what appears to be extraordinary abstractness. Like all transformative works much of the effort involved is taken up by the "destruction" of one's old way of thinking, which often makes for a rather unfortunate literary style.

The pedagogical and existential aspects of this Thesis are of considerable importance. They signify more than simply a method of writing philosophy, or some kind of belief in the therapeutic benefits of philosophy. Indeed, both these transformative aspects point toward the central assertion of this Thesis. They point toward the claim that what we take to be reality has itself a hermeneutical character, and that acts of imaginative expression are not only an integral part of the creation of individual worlds but they also have an identical structure to reality itself. Enactments, of what I have referred to here as imaginative expression, are then not only acts of freedom, but as foundational acts that constitute what is taken to be reality at any given place and time (i.e., the world) they are also *authentic* acts. Such acts, however, should not be mistaken for an assertion of the primacy of individualism. For sure they are

⁹ Collingwood's notion of imaginative expression is closely aligned to what I will be referring to throughout this Thesis as a hermeneutical articulation. What is meant by hermeneutical articulation will be addressed specifically in Chapter Six, but will also unfold throughout the Thesis. There are many writers who have expressed Collingwood's idea in different ways. Indeed, something like Collingwood's notion of imaginative expression seems to be operating in all forms of what Rorty refers to as transformative philosophy, which is to be understood here as Continental philosophy. Something like 'imaginative expression' seems to be a necessary aspect of Heidegger's notion of 'disclosure'. It is certainly present, as will become apparent, in Marcuse's presentation of authenticity. At this point I am using Collingwood's term simply to introduce this kind of idea. For a good account of imaginative expression and its relation to such thinkers as Arendt, Gadamer, and Habermas see J. Dunne, *Back to the Rough Ground: 'Phronesis' and 'Techne' in Modern Philosophy and in Aristotle*, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, 1993, especially ch.2.

acts by individuals, but always by individuals acting from within a particular social background. In concert with Marcuse it will be argued that such foundational acts have essentially a "we-like" (*Mitsein*) character.

In order to make good this claim a large part of this Thesis is directed towards an explication of Marcuse's reworking of Heidegger's notion of *being-in-the-world* - a notion that Marcuse finds present in Hegel's ontology. At this introductory stage being-in-the-world is understood to mean the unity of a particular kind of human being and the world. As such Heidegger's notion of *Worldliness* is intended to move beyond the presentation of our encounters with the world as simply encounters with given and external objects, i.e., a world that is present-to-hand. Rather, the world is presented as constitutive of human being and their practical involvements with things, it is presented as a world that is ready-to-hand.¹⁰ But more than this Marcuse's reworking of Heidegger's notion of *Worldliness* stresses reciprocity or being-in-the-world-with-others. In effect this is to claim that Hegel's ontology needs to be grasped as a coherent account of reality in which the unity and meaning of the world are presented as a process of hermeneutic articulation rather than representation.¹¹

However, Marcuse argues that before we can even begin to grasp the radical character of *being-in-the-world-with-others* we need to grasp the original problematic of Hegel's philosophy - the bifurcation of the world into such opposites as spirit and matter, soul and body, faith and understanding, freedom and necessity etc. For Hegel all of these oppositions take the general form of the division between subject and object. Importantly, whilst these oppositions are "concretised in relation to the historical situation of the times" (i.e., they shape the kind of selves that we are, and the kind of world we inhabit) the bifurcation of the world is not an enduring ontological fact. Alienation as such is an historical, not an ontological condition. Indeed for Hegel, philosophy's task is to re-unite what has been divided by analytical thinking (*Verstand*), which Hegel associates with both common sense and the physical sciences, into a totality that can be comprehended by reason (*Vernunft*).

¹⁰ Interestingly, Habermas also comes close to interpreting Hegel's early philosophy as a form of being-in-the world in a recent article; 'From Kant to Hegel and Back again - The Move Towards Detranscendentalism', in *European Journal of Philosophy*, No 7, Issue 2, 1999, p.134 (b).

¹¹ Whilst the Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations* is often associated with linking meaning to articulation within language games, and the practices of specific language games, as opposed to an understanding of meaning as the representation of a truthful and objective world, he is but one of a long line of thinkers who presents truth in this way. The theme of truth and meaning as coherence rather than correspondence is central to connecting the relevance of Marcuse's work to contemporary political theory. It is a theme that underlies the debate over the difference, if any, between the natural and the human sciences, a debate which found its modern beginning in the work of Dilthey. Indeed, as Jay points out, Marcuse argues that the significance of Dilthey's concept of Life was precisely its stress on meaning rather than causality. I will return to this issue in Chapter Six. See M.Jay *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-50*, Heinemann, London, 1973, p.73.

Despite the fact that much of *HO* is couched in terms of the subject and object it is not about maintaining their separation, but rather about re-uniting them, or more specifically reconciling them, in a way whereby neither the subject nor the object is reduced to the other. *HO* is concerned to move beyond the ahistorical perspective of a "given" and bifurcated world to one of radical historicism grounded in historicity. For Marcuse this will involve associating Hegel's "principle of subjectivity" with the methodology of hermeneutics. Once again what is meant by these terms will be a large part of the work of this Thesis. However, as a preliminary statement I will assert that in Marcuse's hands Hegel's principle of subjectivity concerns the transformation of hermeneutics from an epistemological method to an ontological concept. It involves a continuation of Heidegger's attempt to transform hermeneutics from a method of understanding a text to an account of the underlying process of reality. What then is the hermeneutical method?

At its most general level hermeneutics is understood in this Thesis to be a process that shapes and creates meaning and unity through a process of continual questioning. Hermeneutics in this sense is closely aligned with both Hegel's dialectic and Heidegger's philosophical method of destruction whereby previous forms of facticity are re-interpreted in a way that leads to the "disclosure" of ontological truth (I will return to the details of this statement below). As such hermeneutics (like Hegel's dialectic and Heidegger's destruction) describes both a method of doing philosophy, and also the ontological character of the subject, the world, and reality itself.¹² In developing this understanding of hermeneutics I have drawn upon several philosophers - Charles Taylor, Hans-Georg Gadamer and R.G.Collingwood. Whilst the first two will come as no surprise Collingwood may appear as the odd man out. To dispel this view, and to help clarify this preliminary statement on hermeneutics I will quote a passage from Gadamer's *Truth and Method*.

Thus a person who wants to understand must question what lies behind what is said. He must understand it as an answer to the question. If we go back *behind* what is said, then we inevitably ask questions *beyond* what is said. We understand the sense of the text only by understanding the horizon of the question - a horizon that, as such, necessarily includes other possible answers. Thus the meaning of the sentence is relative to the question to which it is a reply, but that implies that its meaning necessarily exceeds what is said in it. As these considerations show, then, the logic of human sciences is a logic of the question.

¹² The parallel between Hegel's dialectic and Heidegger's programme of destruction, in reference to the question, is made explicit in an unpublished paper by T.Schwarz Wentzer, *Heidegger's Early Hegelianism*, Aarhus University, Denmark, 1997.

Despite Plato we are not very ready for such logic. Almost the only person I find a link with here is R.G.Collingwood. In a brilliant and telling critique of the Oxford "realist" school, he developed the idea of a logic of question and answer, but unfortunately never elaborated it systematically. He clearly saw what was missing in naive hermeneutics founded on the prevailing philosophical critique. In particular the practice that Collingwood found in English universities of discussing "statements," though perhaps good practice for sharpening one's intelligence, obviously failed to take account of the historicity that is part of all understanding. Collingwood argues thus: We can understand a text only when we understand the question to which it is an answer.¹³

The horizon of the question that Gadamer refers to here is the particular involvement or being-in-the-world that we find ourselves (i.e. our historical circumstances). It is what Heidegger also refers to as our *fore-structure*; *fore-having*, *foresight*, and *fore-conception*.¹⁴ For Marcuse Hegel's principle of subjectivity is a presentation of how the subject continually transforms this structure through encountering the *other* and returning to self, i.e., the continual development of self-consciousness. Furthermore, this process, which is characterised thoroughly by historicity, is one of activity. It is a process whereby the world is continually transformed by the activities of historical subjects engaged in cultural formation. Following Hegel, Marcuse refers to this process as freedom, and the kind of subject that is both aware of this process, and delights in its participation, Marcuse calls authentic.

However, for Hegel, one of the central problems of comprehending reality in this way is the continual temptation to reduce reality to either univocal realism or subjective idealism. At this stage univocal realism is to be understood as any form of behaviourism, positivism, scientific determinism etc, which restricts the possibilities (and diversity) of socio-political life to the correspondence of a static reality – to what Marcuse refers to as the "authority of the fact". Subjective idealism is to be understood as any explanation of socio-political life that reduces reality itself to a dependence upon the mind of either individuals, societies, historical epochs or God. The dilemma that this involves, and which Marcuse seeks to move beyond by representing Heidegger's concept of *being-in-the-world*, is on one hand the reduction of spirit to the authoritarian dimensions of empirical fact, and on the other hand the slide into ethical and ontological relativism. However, as Marcuse himself points out, this is not to raise the question as to whether spirit comes before matter or vice-versa. Indeed, for Marcuse the question of the priority of idealism or materialism does not even arise once we grasp that reality is both constituted within a hermeneutical process, and that this process has its

¹³ H.G.Gadmer, *Truth and Method*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1975, p.370.

grounding in the theory of historicity.¹⁵ For Marcuse, such questions are dissolved once we grasp reality as *being-in-the-world*. Nonetheless, in order to move beyond such traditional philosophical problems as the priority of idealism or materialism it is necessary to move through them.

Following Hegel, Marcuse argues that the ethical comportment that grasps *being-in-the-world* is a mediated perspective. In order to comprehend and enact *being-in-the-world* our common-sense perspective of reality, as a given world that stands-over a given form of consciousness must be abandoned. For Marcuse human freedom is an ethical comportment that has passed through such philosophical problems (as idealism or materialism) to a position where the meaning and constitution of our world (but not reality itself) is comprehended as the actualisation of the collective work of specific peoples, who are themselves in a constant state of transformation. However, having reached this point of development there remains the continual danger of what Heidegger refers to as 'falling'. As Kellner point out in relation to this issue, Marcuse re-historicises Heidegger's notion of 'falling' and connects it to the Hegelian concept of alienation, and the Marxist concept of reification.¹⁶ Indeed, much of *HO* is concerned with not only re-developing a Hegelian perspective that accords with *being-in-the-world* (i.e., that reconciles opposites and overcomes alienation), but also with breaking down the processes of reification that pervade the modern mind, processes that lead to a forgetfulness of how the world derives its meaning. As such Marcuse's reworking of *being-in-the-world* is not only an account of reality, of a fundamental ontology that seeks amongst other things to make explicit the structures of human existence, but it also offers an account of an ethical life-form that has broken through the reified socio-political structures to non-alienated existence. For Marcuse the possibility of realising such an ethical life-form is the possibility of realising a life of happiness and freedom.

None of this is to say that Marcuse simply reads Heidegger into Hegel. Rather, Marcuse presents his Heideggerian reading as a continuation and development of Hegel's early philosophical works. It is a philosophic development that makes its way into Heidegger's work through Dilthey's notion of historicity, or more specifically Life characterised by historicity. In effect, Marcuse claims that the notion of historicity has its origins in Hegel's early writings but needs to be re-interpreted, or re-trieved anew, in the light of both Dilthey and Heidegger's work. Marcuse is in effect demanding that we need once more to expose Hegel's concept of Life to the hermeneutical circle of critical theory, to the logic of the

¹⁴ See *Ibid.*, p.266.

¹⁵ See H.Marcuse, 'Contributions to a Phenomenology of Historical Materialism,' (1928), in *Telos*, Number 4, Fall, 1969, pp.29f.

question. And the central question to which Marcuse's text is an answer is; What are the fundamental characteristics of reality, and is there an ethical form of life that enacts this authentic or original character? Whilst this question may initially seem to be identical to that asked and answered in precisely those quarters which Marcuse criticises, it is, as I hope to show, very different.

Structure of Thesis

The following work is divided into three parts and a conclusion. Part One has two chapters which attempt to lay the ground work for an interpretation of *HO*. Chapter One aims to clarify the ongoing problem of the destruction of social diversity in the face of global capital. In so doing the importance of moving beyond deterministic meta-theories is considered to be crucial. However, this chapter questions whether meaningful forms of social diversity are sustainable without universal ethical criteria. In sections 1.1 to 1.3, three initial questions will be raised concerning: the constitution of diverse social realities, why they should be valued, and the possibility of the resolution of conflict without the use of political terror. In raising these questions these sections will locate the problem of enacting meaningful forms of social diversity within the larger context of modernity. Having clarified the contemporary aspects of this problem section 1.4 will begin the case for re-examining Marcuse's early project. With this background in place section 1.5 will outline what Marcuse's early project involved. Section 1.6 will identify the lines along which this Thesis is to be distinguished from other critiques and commentaries of Marcuse's early work. In Chapter Two the central terms and themes of ontology, Life and historicity will be introduced both in a general sense, and in the specific sense that Marcuse uses these terms. The distinguishing characteristics which identify the importance of Marcuse's work will also be addressed in this chapter.

Part Two begins the detailed examination of *HO*. Marcuse's stated aim in this text is to investigate the ground of historical entities. However, I will argue that Marcuse is in fact asking questions concerning the fundamental character of reality. Significantly, these questions are not to be interpreted as questions concerning causation but rather those concerning constitution. Whilst the three chapters that make up this part follow Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel's *Science of Logic* much of their content involves developing my own understanding of both ontology and historicity. As such Part Two is labour intensive.

Part Two primarily investigates Marcuse's claim to have found within the *Logic* an ambivalence whereby Hegel's own ontology is initially presented as being grounded in the concept of Life, rather than the cognitive substance of the Absolute. However, in the latter parts of the *Logic*, and in Hegel's subsequent work, Life, as an ontological concept, was

¹⁶ D.Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse And The Crisis Of Marxism*, p.44.

pushed into the background. Through his re-interpretation of Hegel's concept of Life Marcuse argues that Hegel offers us a way of grasping reality (Being) as *essentially* characterised by a form of motility. This form of motility is historicity, a process whereby the past is continually lifted up into the present, and where the present is continually directed towards the future. As such this notion of motility, which is clearly influenced by Heidegger, in effect collapses the common view of time as a series of passing present tenses. Historicity so understood does not deny that time exists as past, present and future but it does deny that time is fully "consumed by any one of these distinctions."¹⁷ The assertion that reality is a temporal structure (i.e., characterised by historicity), which is not consumed by the distinctions of tense, opens the way to move beyond what Marcuse will later call the "authority of the fact". For Marcuse, what is at stake here is nothing less than the possibility of authentic being. Significantly, Marcuse is not interpreting Hegel's ontology as having relevance only to the human sciences -to the development of human self-consciousness and the cultural constructs of human endeavours. Rather, Marcuse is claiming that Hegel's early ontology, presents an account of Being itself, of reality *per se*. Marcuse is presenting us with a form of foundational metaphysics which he thinks enables the continual happening of diversity (differentiated unity). What is more, Marcuse thinks there is an ethical comportment that re-enacts this original character of reality. Following Heidegger, Marcuse names this ethical comportment "authenticity". In order to make his case Marcuse proposes a re-interpretation of Hegel's earlier writings where the concept of Life, in all its historicity, is more apparent.

Part Three of this Thesis presents Marcuse's reading of Hegel's earlier writings. Particular attention is paid to the *PhG*. Chapter Six prepares the ground for Marcuse's encounter with *PhG* by examining Taylor's Heideggerian notions of *engaged agency*, *background*, and *articulation*. In this chapter the subject of hermeneutics is examined in detail with the specific intention of making explicit its correlation with the concept of Life, and how Marcuse distinguishes between Life, reality and nature. Chapter Seven is primarily concerned with Marcuse's interpretation of the *PhG*. Specifically, it concentrates upon Marcuse's reading of Hegel's Lordship and Bondage dialectic as the crucial stage in the development of *self-consciousness*, and subsequently authentic being. Indeed, Marcuse considers the ontological shift that occurs within this dialectic as the movement that enables the self-consciousness to overcome its previously reified perspective and become an active subject capable of embracing authenticity and freedom. Significantly this shift is dependent upon the mutual recognition of others in an intersubjective environment, whereby the self-consciousness directs itself towards a continual process creative articulation. Creative articulation is understood here in its broadest sense. It is a process of social interaction and work, whereby

¹⁷ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1987, p.302.

the collective efforts contribute to an on-going process of cultural formation (*Bildung*). What is creatively articulated, or constituted, is not simply knowledge and its material manifestations in forms of technology and the forces of production, but more significantly both the historical subject and the world. As such Marcuse's interpretation of the Lordship and Bondage dialectic is crucial to grasping his synthesis of Hegel and Heidegger, of the principle of subjectivity and hermeneutical destruction. As has already been stated the ethical forms of life, which are fully conscious of this process, and which open themselves up to, delight in, and embrace this kind of responsible interaction, Marcuse refers to as authentic being. Significantly, the authenticity of this ethical comportment towards the world derives from its correlation to the fundamental ontological structure of Being.

In the Conclusion I will gather up for the final time the central correlates that make up Marcuse's position. I will summarise how the notions of Life, historicity and spirit stand in relation to each other and in the light of Marcuse's re-interpretation of Hegel's ontology. Having done this I will briefly examine aspects of Marcuse's later political writings with the view to sketching some possible lines of continuity between Marcuse's earliest philosophical writings and his critique of technological capitalism. In particular, I will examine Marcuse's notions of *one-dimensional being*, *revolutionary subjects*, and the *aesthetic dimension*. I will argue that our understanding of all three of these concepts benefits considerably from a re-interpretation of Marcuse's early work. Furthermore, I will also argue that all three of these concepts stand together as a single and unified process: freedom.

Indeed, I shall conclude that, at the very least, Marcuse's mature political philosophy can be re-interpreted meaningfully in the light of *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*. This involves the assertion that Marcuse never abandoned his belief that reality and truth must be grasped as a motility that cannot be accounted for in terms of static categories, and it is this motility that opens up the possibility of a creative mode of life. Furthermore, this motility is driven within the spiritual realm by an "unconquerable" separation between forms of subjectivity and the other. This unbridgeable non-identity, which Marcuse refers to as the "absolute difference within being: equality-with-self-in-otherness", is both a source of alienation, and also a source of continual social possibilities. I shall conclude that the absolute difference within being is the basis of Marcuse's final presentation of freedom, as something akin to permanent revolution, as well as his belief in multiplicity of spiritual life-forms, i.e., the multi-dimensionality of spiritual life. To the extent that ethical communities are directed towards creative life-enhancing processes that embrace the absolute difference within being, then diversity and freedom will follow. If they are incapable of accepting difference, then diversity will be diminished and alienation will follow. Furthermore, if ethical communities are directed towards creative life enhancing processes they can be described as authentic.

They can be interpreted as reflecting the original unity of reality (Life) as a motility characterised by historicity, and reconciled with difference.

Part One

Chapter One: The Political Problem of Ethical Relativism and Terror

In a global environment that is dominated by the pervasive normalising and, for many, nihilistic forces of modern capitalism, attention is often directed towards identifying and re-asserting the existence and importance of diversity. Indeed, it is common place for many interested in social and political philosophy to *re-assert* the existence of a plurality of perspectives, a plurality of world views which express diverse worlds each governed by their own forms of truth, none of which can be explained or reduced to another, and all of which are in a state of flux. One form this has taken is of asserting that diverse cultures are in fact *ontologically* distinct – that such cultures constitute independent worlds / realities / language games that can not be reduced to single explanatory narrative without doing violence to what characterises such cultures as distinct and meaningful. As such all attempts to structure social practices upon what have been characterised as meta-theories (including such concepts as universal human rights) can only lead to the destruction of diversity.

Such positions reflect, in part, what has become known in philosophy as the 'linguistic turn', i.e. specific linguistic discourses are the furthest point that philosophy can reach in its pursuit of knowledge and truth; there is no reality other than that which is presented under some linguistic narrative.¹ In effect this is to argue that not only is there no single true, or authentic, form of social life towards which social and political institutions and practices should be directed, but also that the different kind of entities that exist within distinct realities (including individual subjects – selves) are a consequence of those realities. This is to say, no particular group of entities has any privileged claim to objectivity or truth. For instance, such Nietzschean perspectivalism would argue that what shows up in the world of the physical sciences has both the same ontological and ethical status as what shows up in the spiritual world of an indigenous culture.²

A corollary of this, in part as a consequence of the insightful writings of thinkers such as Lyotard and Foucault, is that any position that even hints of being grounded in some form of

¹ The linguistic turn is most often associated with the work of L. Wittgenstein. In more recent times thinkers such as J. Lyotard and R. Rorty have presented arguments in support of such a position. See R. Rorty (ed.) *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*, Chicago, 1967.

² To point out the influence of Nietzsche's ethical and ontological perspectivalism upon post-structuralist and post-modern thought is common place and needs no further argument. For a succinct account of what Nietzsche's concept of perspectivalism involves see R. Schacht, 'Nietzsche' in T. Honderich (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, Oxford, 1995, pp. 619ff.

social universality is dismissed as an attempt to re-introduce a totalising meta-theory.³ Any appeal to an ethical grounding, which claims universal application, then, is to be rejected on the basis that it privileges, and imposes, one culture's perspective upon another. Universality is to be rejected because it radically determines the substantial character of all other social realities - i.e., it ultimately destroys meaningfully diverse forms of social life, and hence is described as 'terror'. Such universal claims include any demand for the realisation of an *essential* way of human-being that has hitherto been repressed. Instead, we are encouraged to celebrate and embrace a plurality of perspectives in an interdisciplinary fashion. Such an approach, it is claimed, not only breaks down traditional boundaries but enables a creative process of transformation of both the self and diverse worlds to take place. In the face of a narrowing of socio-political life-forms many are making the *ethical* claim that the destruction of diverse socio-political cultures and practices, in the name of such things as universal human rights, is inappropriate. Meaningfulness, it is often argued, is to be found in the creation and active involvement in diverse social practices. It seems social diversity has become synonymous with meaningful social and political identity.

In order to live a life of happiness, and certainly in order to live a meaningful life characterised by freedom, this Thesis accepts the importance of much of the perspectival position sketched out in the above paragraph. It accepts the importance of developing self-ruling societies, of engaging in life through the medium of autonomous collectives of people who take responsibility for creating their own lives and the worlds they live in. But what criteria are we appealing to when the value of diversity is raised above the value of such unifying concepts as the productive capacity of capitalism? Indeed, there is almost a constant chorus of paternal voices that sound the words, "For sure diverse ways of life are colourful, but many of them cannot even provide for their basic needs and security. Furthermore, social diversity without some kind of over-riding form of social unification (such as human rights) more often leads to social harm rather than social good - witness the Balkans." How then is the ethical priority of diversity to be grounded? And what is politically, socially and existentially at stake in addressing this question?

To appreciate the significance of these questions three logically prior but interrelated questions will be examined. At this stage I seek only to indicate what these questions may entail, and what kinds of answers may be adequate. In particular I wish to draw attention to the ethical dilemma that is raised within the above description - what I have entitled "The Political Problem of Ethical Relativism". Furthermore, I wish to draw out the correlation that

³ See especially J.Lyotard. *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1997. In this text Lyotard is concerned to move away from what Fredric Jameson describes as the two 'great master narratives' of modernity. These two narratives are those of 'liberation' beyond capitalism and the 'rhetoric of totality' deriving from Hegelian philosophy. See p.xix.

exists between this ethical dilemma and particular world views (ontological perspectives). In so doing the following discourse is located within the broader concerns of Habermas's understanding of the philosophical discourse of *modernity*.⁴ The first question is; *What distinguishes a diverse social-form or world as diverse?* If we are to assert the existence and value of distinct social worlds it seems reasonable to demand an account of what exactly we are talking about. The second question – *why should specific worlds be valued?* – will draw attention to the issue of relativism an issue that haunts any contextual account of political life. This question shall also serve to direct attention to the dogmatic tendency that resides within valued communities. The final introductory question – *what implications does this have for incompatible social worlds in terms of the resolution of conflict?* – will draw out what is at stake in resolving the political dilemma of ethical relativism. As will become clear the first two questions culminate in the final one, and it is the final question concerning the resolution of conflict that demands an answer to whether the politics of diversity is sustainable without unifying ethical criteria.

Having drawn the lines of what the above questions entail I will present the case for examining *HO*. It will be suggested that within this work Marcuse directly addresses the problem I have outlined and presents some interesting insights that are well worth consideration.

1.1. What Distinguishes A Diverse Social World As Diverse?

The advent of post-modern and post-structuralist philosophy has brought with it a renewed interest in diversity – an interest in what are variously termed independent and distinct social realities, worlds, metaphoric language games or life-forms. However, such interest in social diversity often fails to make clear what it is that distinguishes a particular social-form as diverse. Or more specifically, what it is that distinguishes alternative ways of life from the way of life associated with the dominant form of life that is rejected as inadequate? Yet surely to assert the existence of a plurality of diverse and meaningful worlds carries with it the demand to account for what it is that characterises individual worlds as diverse and meaningful? How are such worlds to be distinguished?

At its most vulgar level social worlds are often presented as a kind of consumer choice. Do we constitute ourselves as Buddhists or stockbrokers, as hippies or yuppies, careerists or artists, conservationists or consumers, homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, asexual, monogamists or polygamists, activists or contemplators, or sometimes all of these identities, and sometimes

⁴ This is to say that I accept Habermas's presentation of modernity. This will become apparent in section 1.2 and 1.3. See J.Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Polity Press, Oxford, 1990, *passim*.

none? Yet if we are to avoid collapsing into some kind of trivial subjectivism then knowledge of specific worlds (with their distinct governing forms of truth) and transition between them is likely to be considerably more involved than a simple choice between preferred life styles or some kind of process of social networking? This is not to deny that enriched and meaningful lives may ultimately entail participation and transition between distinct ways or dimensions of being. Nor is it to deny that the boundaries between distinct worlds are never clear cut, and are always shifting. However, there comes a point when to equate the distinction between individual life-style choices with the distinction between diverse worlds becomes not only a gross trivialisation of the very concept of meaningfully diverse social worlds, but reduces the whole notion of distinct worlds to incoherent nonsense.⁵ Furthermore, if the presentation of diversity is intended to resist and subvert certain dominant forms of life associated with modern capitalism, then such incoherent nonsense is more likely to fulfil an ideological role rather than one of radical resistance that creates alternative forms of social being.

There is, however, another objection beyond whatever ideological function is performed by the likes of roller-blading, body-pierced Microsoft employees who preach the virtues of Buddhism whilst eating Big Macs and exercising their share options. And that is the complex relationship that exists between whatever social realities we find ourselves involved in and what kind of identity or character we display as subjects. This is to say, that upon examination we may find that the relationship between our selves and what we comprehend as our world is much stronger than we first imagined. How this relationship unfolds is one of the central themes of this Thesis, and it is not one that can be easily summarised. Nonetheless, what can be said at this stage is that this Thesis rejects any notion of disengaged subjects who unproblematically transit from one world to the next. In opposition to this form of hyper-liberalism I will unfold a correlation between the self and the world in terms of what will be referred to as a hermeneutical articulation that functions as both a form of unity and meaning. In its simplest form this entails the claim that the kind of world we inhabit determines the kind of subjects we can become, and the kind of subjects we can become determines the kind of world we inhabit. Significantly, the notion of a hermeneutical articulation also entails comprehending both the self and the world as subjects. I shall return to the notion of hermeneutical articulation throughout this Thesis, and in detail in Chapter Six. At this point it is enough to make the claim that any adequate account of a diverse social world that functions as the dimension within which meaningful life is enacted must, if it is to avoid collapsing into trivial forms of subjectivism, also account for the notion of objective

⁵ H. Dreyfus seems to be making this kind of point when he states "Choosing one's self-interpretation and all one's 'values' would be absurd. If there were no difference between that *which* we choose and *that on the basis of which* we choose, if *everything* were up for choice, there would be no basis left for choosing one

unity. To demand an account of objective unity is to recognise that the concept of diverse worlds involves more than making some kind of 'new age' subjective or psychological shift. Diverse worlds involve forms of unity beyond the individuals who inhabit them, hence the term objective unity.

In effect this is to claim that if we are to grasp the constitution of diverse social-forms we may find that diversity has a lot to do with not only individual entities including individual subjects, but also with the objective historical unifying structures through which they are encountered. We may find that notions of difference and unity are coincidental. As indicated this should not be understood in a reductive or causal way, but rather as an inquiry into correlations, an inquiry that simultaneously engages in a discourse of difference and a discourse of unity, a discourse of the self and a discourse of the world, a discourse of subjectivity and a discourse of objectivity. Indeed, much of the recent work inspired by thinkers such as Wittgenstein, which is conducted around the notion of diversity, particularly notions of the subject, explicitly involves the articulation of distinct categories of unification that exist at a particular time and place.⁶ To talk about a diverse world in this sense is to identify the entire constellation of beliefs, values, practices, forms of knowledge etc within any given social organisation. It is to associate the notion of world with something like Kuhn's "disciplinary matrix" or what Heidegger equates to his *Ontical-Existentiell* sense of world.⁷

In opposition to univocal accounts of reality this Thesis accepts the notion of historically diverse social worlds inhabited by historically diverse subjects. It also accepts to the extent that such worlds can be identified as distinct worlds they will be governed by their own irreducible forms of truth. And that these forms of truth have an objective character beyond the individuals who participate or enact such truths. However, whilst the process of comprehending what these forms of truth involve may well be frustrated by specific meta-theories that reduce the plurality of objective forms of truth to one perspective, it will be argued that we should not lose sight of the importance of comprehending the objective structures of unification, the disciplinary matrixes, which enable diverse social structures to function as diverse structures. Nor should we lose sight of the deeper structures (what will be referred to below as ontological structures) that enable specific disciplinary matrixes themselves to come into existence. As Hegel so compellingly demonstrates in the *PhG*, to assert the existence and importance of diversity leads us towards the concept of unity not away from it. Furthermore, whilst the subjective aspect certainly has its role to play in any account of unity, it is not the only aspect. The discipline of grasping the unification of

thing rather than another, and free choice would amount to absurdity." H.Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1995, p.189.

⁶ See footnote 12 in the Introduction.

⁷ See H.Dreyfus, *op.cit.*, p.90.

specific worlds - of distinguishing diverse worlds as diverse - is understood in this Thesis to be that of ontology, and it is towards a comprehension of ontology that much of this Thesis is directed. Specifically, in Part Two of this Thesis I shall present a detailed account of the ontological problem of unity.

1.2. Why Should Diverse Social Worlds Be Valued?

The second question relating to diversity of social worlds is that of value. For even if it is the case that a plurality of worlds can be qualitatively distinguished by identifying distinct forms of unification, i.e. forms of reason, forms of knowledge, social practices etc., the question of why such worlds should be valued, both from within and from without, remains unanswered. The traditional, and in many instances the contemporary, approach to this kind of ethical question has been to link questions of value to an external authority such as the laws of nature, the laws governing historical development etc. Most often the appeal to an external authority is ultimately an appeal to specific conceptions of God. This is to say the question of value has traditionally been linked to questions of first principles; to metaphysical questions concerning ontology at a grand scale, what we may call cosmic ontology. In answer to why a particular diverse form should be valued respondents assert that they should be valued because they ultimately participate and represent or correspond to *the* objective truth – the truth being understood as a constellation of universals culminating in a single universal which is common to *all* reality (God or its equivalent). Furthermore, the notion of God, more often than not, is unfolded in terms of ‘perfect goodness’. Such appeals are then generally underpinned by firstly corresponding social and political forms to what many have referred to as a univocal understanding of Being: the notion that ultimately there is a single reality unified by an independent substance existing without need of anything from outside.⁸ Secondly, univocal conceptions of being are identified with perfect goodness.

Throughout the Middle Ages this kind of doctrine was known as *realism*.⁹ Realism in this sense, and the sense in which I will use it throughout this Thesis, refers to:

the view that what is ultimately real is that which underlies properties – what “stands under” (*sub-stantia*) and remains continuously present throughout all change. Because of its emphasis on enduring presence, this philosophy is also called

⁸ This kind of critique is exemplified by Heidegger’s criticism of ‘onto-theology’. See M.Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Harper Collins, New York, 1962, Division One, ch.III. For a commentary see H.Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, MIT Press, 1995, ch.6. In a different form this critique is also taken up by R.Rorty’s attack on *foundational epistemology*. See R.Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1979.

⁹ M.Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1992, p.123.

the "meta-physics of presence". It is found for example in Plato's notion of the Forms, Aristotle's primary substances, the Creator of Christian belief, Descartes's *res extensa* and *res cogitans*, Kant's noumena, and the physical stuff presupposed by scientific naturalism.¹⁰

Significantly, forms of realism so understood do not take seriously the notion of independent diverse realities, or worlds each governed by their own distinct forms of truth. When Lyotard and others reject social and political meta-theories they are also rejecting the direct connection of socio-political life to univocal conceptions of Being, they are rejecting accounts of reality which invoke any version of the doctrine of reality. They are rejecting the ethical evaluation of socio-political life in terms of any univocal account of reality whether it is metaphysical, theological, scientific or any other manifestation.

The rejection of accounts of realism, which function as external authorities (i.e., as authorities that are both prior to, and separate from, the world), has both ontological and ethical consequences. Ontologically it opens up the way to the possibility of a plurality of worlds.¹¹ Ethically it creates a serious crisis in resolving questions of value and truth both within and between possible worlds. For if univocal conceptions of being are rejected, then some kind of *self-grounded ethical criterion* needs to be established if questions of value are to be resolved, and meaningful as opposed to trivial and nihilistic social life-forms created. Jurgen Habermas draws attention to the central role this problem has played and continues to play in the direction of modern society in his lectures *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. For Habermas

the need for unification ... emerges with the separation evoked by the principle of subjectivity. Such a need is forced on philosophy as soon as modernity conceives itself historically, in other words, as soon as it becomes conscious of the dissolution of the exemplary past, and of the necessity of creating all that is normative out of itself as a historical problem.¹²

Thomas McCarthy succinctly states Habermas's position, and the existential dilemma it creates, in the following terms ; "... the disintegration of sacred canopies has opened the

¹⁰ C.Guignon, 'Introduction' in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, CUP, Cambridge, 1998, p.4.

¹¹ Nietzsche captured the onto-ethical importance of this in his rejection of the notion of God. For Nietzsche the notion of God, when employed by the likes of Christian Moralists, denigrates the possibility of earthly happiness; "The concept 'God' was invented as the opposite of the concept 'life' -everything detrimental, poisonous and slanderous, and all hostility to life, was bound together in one horrible unit." F.Nietzsche quoted in *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, OUP, Oxford, 1995, p.319.

¹² J.Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1987, p.19.

question 'How should I (or one, or we) live?' to the irreducible pluralism of modern life."¹³ Significantly, this existential dilemma is claimed to arise as a consequence of the destruction of previous metaphysical world views that invoke some kind of external authority. To use Nietzschean terms, the modern period (i.e., in order to be modern) is characterised by raising the question of how to avoid "the advent of nihilism" following the "death of God"? The point being asserted here is that there is an inseparable correlation between ethical life and ontological perspectives. A society that believes in God will be a very different kind of society, living in a very different kind of a world than one that does not believe in God. But it is one thing to destroy conceptions of reality that unfold in terms of a reliance upon some kind of external authority, and another thing to destroy conceptions of reality *per se*. Indeed, perspectivalism can itself be considered as an account of reality. And as such, questions raised by perspectivalism concern not only how issues of legitimation, but also how issues of value, are determined within individual realities. It is the determination of both legitimacy and value, within specific historical realities, without reference to external authorities, that Habermas refers to as a self-grounded ethical criterion.

But what exactly would qualify as a self-grounded ethical criterion? There would seem to be two possible approaches to this question. One approach would be to establish a self-grounded ethical criterion that *transcends* particular worlds in a manner that can not be reduced to any of the worlds it transcends. For Habermas coming to terms with such a criterion has become the primary issue of modern philosophical thinking. It is important to note that when in the Hegelian tradition thinkers, like Habermas and Marcuse, attempt to present an ethical criterion that transcends particular social-forms, they claim to be doing so from within the bounds of history. Habermas is not appealing to an external authority that resides outside of history, but a criterion that can not be reduced into any particular instance of history. It is in this sense that the notion of transcendence is used. The paradigm for this kind of transcendent criterion is Hegel's *principle of subjectivity*.

Whilst it would be impossible to give a full explanation at this point as to what Hegel's principle of subjectivity involves, it is important to begin moving towards such an explanation. To this extent the following quotation, from an unpublished paper by Thomas Schwarz Wentzer, will be of some assistance in grasping the movement by which Habermas claims Hegel initiated the philosophical discourse of modernity. Specifically, we need to note the hermeneutical and intersubjective aspects that that this quotation draws attention, for as I shall argue below, both these aspects are fundamental to understanding Marcuse's presentation of historicity.

¹³ D.Couzens Hoy and T.McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1994, p.52.

This principle is the process of coming to know oneself that determines the course of Hegel's *Phenomenology*. Self-knowledge is only possible through the self's recognition of itself in another as the other of itself, in which process it returns to itself and thereby constitutes self-consciousness. Self knowledge is only possible via the knowledge of the other and its appropriation of other. Hegel regards this principle as the logical law of the world, made equally manifest in the individual subject, in history and in philosophy. Both the philosophising of the individual and as a whole are subject to the same historicity whose structures can be explicated as the products of the reflexive process constituting self-consciousness.¹⁴

The second approach to the establishment of a self-grounded criterion is perhaps both more tautological and descriptive. It is certainly less ambitious, but in being so often lacks ethical authority. It is broadly speaking the approach of Foucault, Lyotard and others who point out that in order for a particular social reality to come into being it is only necessary that certain kinds of unifying principles, forms of truth – what Foucault calls epistemes and Lyotard refers to as language games – work their way into social life-forms, and become valued by those who practice such life-forms. Lyotard succinctly expresses this position, in regards to legitimization, in the following words

With modern science, two features appear in the problematic of legitimization. To begin with, it leaves behind the metaphysical search for a first proof or transcendental authority as a response to the question: 'How do you prove the proof?' or, more generally, 'Who decides the conditions of truth?' It is recognised that the conditions of truth, in other words, the rules of the game of science, are immanent in that game, that they can only be established within the bonds of a debate that is already scientific in nature, and there is no other proof that the rules are good than the consensus extended to them by the experts.¹⁵

There are in fact many social theorists who present this kind of historically relative argument, not only in regards to legitimization, but also in respect to ethical systems. As will be discussed below, it is part of Hegel's understanding of the unfolding of *Geist* within history. It has also been noted that this is a central aspect of Nietzsche's concept of perspectivism.

R.G.Collingwood made much of this kind of contextual presentation of knowledge, and its correlation to social systems, through his notion of a constellation of *absolute*

¹⁴ T.Schwarz Wentzer, *Heidegger's early Hegelianism*, Unpublished paper, Aarhus University, Denmark, 1997, p.5.

¹⁵ J.Lyotard, *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1997, p.29.

presuppositions. I have also already indicated that T.Kuhn is often read as presenting a similar account with his notion of shifting *paradigms* and *disciplinary matrixes*.¹⁶ In general, to approach this question in this manner, i.e. by asserting that socio-political being carries its own autonomy, is to assume an historicist point of view. Historicism is used here at its most general level, meaning that "all human activity and creations - law, language, religion, morality, art and philosophy - are the product of history, the creation of a specific society at specific time."¹⁷ It should also be noted that historicism, so understood, is distinct from the theory of *historicity*, which is an attempt to characterise the essential aspects of historical entities. This is an important distinction which I will directly address in section 2.3.

As such, for many contextualists it ultimately does not make sense to ask why specific articles of faith are valued but rather the task is to simply identify that they are valued, and articulate what kind of social practices they entail, and what kind of subjects they enable. I take this to be one of the important aspects of Foucault's work, especially as presented in the *History of Sexuality*.¹⁸ However, whilst this relativist approach may indeed be a convincing account of how different historical social-forms are valued from within specific worlds, it has severe limitations when we come to ask questions about value between worlds, when we come to confront the question of why *other* diverse social worlds should be valued by those who don't share the same articles of faith. No more clearly is this revealed than when diverse worlds come into particular forms of conflict.¹⁹ It is then to the question of the imposition of political terror in order to resolve conflict with the *other* that I will now address.

1.3. Diverse Social Worlds and Terror.

I have suggested that the notion of diverse social worlds raises questions concerning the identification and recognition of the distinct characteristics that constitute and distinguish specific diverse worlds as diverse. Furthermore, if we wish to avoid trivialising the notion of the irreducibility of specific worlds, then, we should address these questions as ontological questions, questions concerning what kind of things exist, and what they have in common (universals). However, once univocal conceptions of reality, which function as "sacred canopies", are replaced, or confronted, with ontological perspectives that assert the existence

¹⁶ See R.G.Collingwood, *An Essay On Metaphysics*, OUP, Oxford, 1957, especially section V. Also T.Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago Press, Chicago, 1970.

¹⁷ F.Beiser, 'Introduction' in G.W.F.Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Bison, Lincoln, 1995, p.xii.

¹⁸ M.Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Volumes One-Three, Vintage Books, New York, 1990.

¹⁹ Conflict arising from contradiction is of course the driving force of history for any one interested in using an Hegelian approach to socio-political change. To overcome conflict *per se* would be absurd within a Hegelian framework. However, what is not absurd is overcoming conflict which seeks to resolve its contradictions through the use of terror.

of a plurality of diverse social realities, then existential questions of value are raised. Such questions concern why *this* particular diverse world should be valued as a meaningful way to live our lives rather than *that* particular world? I have also suggested the way we answer questions of value will be related to how we answer the logically prior ontological questions, i.e. how we resolve questions of value will be dependent upon whether we invoke some kind of ethical and determining first principle, or whether we invoke some kind of historical contextualism. As indicated above, this Thesis is concerned only with the possibilities that emerge from within history, i.e., it rejects any appeal to external authorities. However, it does not follow that if in answering these ontological questions we embrace some form of historical contextualism, and assert, and take seriously, the existence of diverse worlds, that all distinct worlds are compatible. Indeed, it would appear that many might well be necessarily incompatible. Nor does it follow that such incompatibilities are predominantly benign; the mere "taking of tricks" to use one of Lyotard's expressions, or "abnormal conversations" to be hermeneutically unlocked, to use Rorty's term. In fact, Lyotard provides us with a very useful understanding of such incompatibilities through his notion of terror.

By terror I mean the efficiency gained by eliminating, or threatening to eliminate, a player from the language game one shares with him. He is silenced or consents, not because he has been refuted, but because his ability to participate has been threatened (there are many ways to prevent someone from playing). The decision-maker's arrogance, which in principle has no equivalent in the sciences, consists in the exercise of terror. It says: "Adapt your aspirations to our ends -or else".

And further;

Whenever efficiency ... is derived from a "Say or do this, or else you'll never speak again," then we are in the realm of terror, and the social bond is destroyed.²⁰

Significantly, implied within Lyotard's notion of terror is an assertion of the socio-political importance of reciprocity, a notion that finds one of its strongest articulations in Hegel's Master / Slave dialectic, and one that is central to Marcuse's work. Marcuse's insightful understanding of the problems concerning intersubjectivity will be the focus of Chapter Seven. For now, I wish only to indicate when that this Thesis accepts Lyotard's understanding of terror, and the central role that terror plays in the marginalisation of socio-political lives.

Examples of terroristic incompatibilities are abundant; the conflicts between various forms of indigenous or traditional life and forms of capitalism, conflicts between ecological interests and those that seek to exploit finite resources, conflicts between certain understandings of

positive freedom and the social world that emerges from the disciplined and homogenising imperatives of advanced capitalism. They are the kind of conflicts that are manifested through the continued existence of war (in all its manifestations), the kind of conflicts that become the spectacles that dominate the content of the mass media.²¹ These kinds of conflicts would seem to indicate that there is a problem that exists here beyond communication, beyond the ability to understand the *other*. Indeed, such conflicts often involve not only an inability to understand, but also an absence of will to understand the other. Such conflicts would seem to indicate that any insistence upon the irreducibility of worlds also carries with it the consequence that particular forms of social diversity, particular forms of truth, may be incompatible. Furthermore, such incompatibilities are likely to manifest themselves through one social-form or the other invoking terror. And it would seem that there is no obvious solution to this problem in simply recognising that this kind of conflict is generated by particular social-forms arrogantly laying claim to being a universal meta-theory. To charge a particular way of being, for instance economic liberalism, with being a meta-theory that destroys socio-political diversity is unlikely to reverse either the hubris of such forms of truth, nor their pretensions to universality.

The celebration of diversity, then, is more than a philosophical problem concerning knowledge and different life-styles. It is also, and perhaps more importantly, an ethical crisis which goes beyond questions of legitimation. Ethics is understood here as that which concerns the formulation of principles that allow social life and practices to emerge and sustain themselves. Furthermore, it is a crisis that often manifests itself as an existential dilemma; at some point most individuals and societies have to make ethical choices that apparently exclude one or another social-form. Such choices occur at both local and global levels, and seldom is the choice, or the identification of the boundaries between what is to be chosen, clear. Nor is it a choice between one social-form that reflects a legitimate form of truth and one that does not. Often it is the case that decision-making, and action, is forced upon individuals and societies as a consequence of the way in which dominant forms of power unfold; e.g. when individual and social-forms – communities – come into conflict with a terroristic social-form that threatens them with extinction. Such ethical choices are common place, for example: what are we to do when one diverse interest, say this particular ethnic group decides to exclude another particular ethnic group from a specific territory? What are

²⁰J. Lyotard, *op.cit.*, p.63f and p.46 respectively.

²¹ It might be noted in passing that whilst Hegel is often credited with advocating the importance of war to the development and maintenance of political life, i.e. the State's health, he categorically rejected that war should be conducted with the intention of annihilating the enemy. Indeed, Hegel maintained that even in a condition of war States continue to recognise each other. Whether in fact this is the case or not, one thing is clear and that is Hegel never advocated the withdrawal of recognition of the *other* in the way that is

we to do when a military alliance seeks to resolve such ethnic tension by imposing its own form annihilation? What are we to do when one diverse interest, say that which controls the means of production, chooses to impose individual contracts upon another diverse interest, say that which prefers to engage in collective bargaining? Or what are we to do when one diverse interest, say that which wants to structure education around principles of profit, chooses to ignore those who see education as a necessity for any meaningful form of political association? Or what are we to do when one diverse interest, say white Australian (and non-Australian) landowners, choose to ignore the interests of those seeking Aboriginal access to land? Or what are we to do when any of these situations are reversed? What ethical criteria do we appeal to in order, if not to resolve these conflicts then at least, to inform our actions? What ethical comportment to the world, i.e., what kind of people, would be capable of moving beyond these deadlocks?

The popular solution to this problem is to appeal to some form of liberalism where individual and civil rights (diverse social-forms) are enshrined in a legal constitution that supposedly promotes toleration. However, it is questionable whether the concept of liberal-toleration is of any use at all in regards to the resolution of conflict between diverse social worlds that are fundamentally incompatible, and which are often directed by terror - the effective annihilation of the other. Indeed, how could the horrors of the twentieth century fail to convince even the most casual observer that there are many socio-political forms that are thoroughly malicious in relation to co-existence? Toleration simply does not work in the face of terror. And it is not a one way street, it is not simply the case that only authoritarian social-forms impose terror upon non-authoritarian forms. Rather, non-authoritarian social-forms can not afford to tolerate authoritarianism if they are themselves to survive. Indeed, when recognition of one identity has been withdrawn by another, as a preliminary move to their annihilation, or at the very least assimilation, then responding in kind may be the only path to survival. Paradoxically, non-authoritarian social-forms may find themselves at certain times imposing terror upon authoritarian structures in order to be able to live alternative lives. As Eric Fromm points out, love can not survive in a toxic environment.²² Indeed, this seems to be one of the points that Marcuse was making in his controversial essay "Repressive Tolerance", where he proposed complete intolerance towards the terror imposed by Western capitalism.²³

typical of contemporary war, i.e. he never condoned what I have been referring to as *terror*. For more on Hegel's position on war see M.Inwood, op.cit., p.306f.

²² E. Fromm, *The Art of Living*, Unwin Books, London, 1957.

²³ H.Marcuse, 'Repressive Tolerance' in H.Marcuse, B.Moore and R.P.Wolff, *Critique of Tolerance*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1965, pp.81-117. For a summary of the controversy that this essay created see R.Lichtman, 'Repressive Tolerance' in, R.Pippin, A.Feenberg, C.Weibel (eds.), *Marcuse: Critical Theory And The Promise Of Utopia*, MacMillan, New York, 1988, pp.189-211. Also, D.Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, Macmillan Press, London, 1984, pp.282ff, esp. footnote 11.

The terror Marcuse was referring to took the forms of racism, militarism, American economic and cultural imperialism (now called globalism), environmental destruction, etc. Marcuse insisted that such forms of terror "should not be tolerated because they are impeding, if not destroying, the chances of creating an existence without fear and misery."²⁴ There are, it seems, many forms that the struggle unto life and death continues to take.

Furthermore, as Marcuse and other critics of liberalism have tirelessly pointed out, liberalism itself is an historical political form whose practices are founded upon such notions as the sovereignty and autonomy of the individual self.²⁵ When confronted with diverse life-forms, which do not give priority to absolute value of the individual (for instance the theocratic politics of the Islamic world, innumerable indigenous life-forms from Aboriginal Australia to Bougainville to the Amazon, or even any form of communitarianism), liberalism is itself incapable of abiding to its primary principle of toleration. At the very point where liberal-toleration is supposed to provide an answer to conflict its *essence* as a particular socio-political form prevents it from taking the *truth* of other forms of diversity seriously. It is precisely at this point that toleration is revealed not as a universal value, but as a constellation of particular presuppositions about the disengaged form of the self, presuppositions which are often not shared by others. Far from being a political form that is capable of resolving violent social and political conflict, liberalism falls into the trap of simply asserting a particular form of life as a universal form. In so doing, as Marcuse argues in 'Repressive Tolerance', it imposes its own form of terror upon the *other*, which is precisely why such conflict is generated in the first place. Surely this also seems to be one of the most compelling aspects of Lyotard's criticism of meta-theories. And no more is this so than within the context of globalism.

If it is a fact that the liberal notion of toleration simply begs the question of how to resolve conflict characterised by terror (the refusal and or inability to recognise the other), and if it is the case that indifference is not an option, then it would appear that a resolution can only occur in one of two ways. Either terror has its way and one diverse interest annihilates the other, or a mediated resolution occurs. More often than not annihilation occurs as a process of reduction or assimilation of one side by the other. Unity is achieved not by solving the problem but by eliminating it, by imposing the final solution. This form of unity is the politics of domination and homogenisation; it is the politics of refusing to extend recognition to the other, it is the politics of a closed society that refuses to take diversity of reason seriously. It is the form of politics that most of us are familiar. This Thesis is concerned with the possibility of the second response. It is concerned with the political discourse of

²⁴ H. Marcuse quoted by D. Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, Macmillan Press, London, 1984, p. 282.

mediation rather than toleration. However, mediation is not to be understood here as simply another set of rules that disengaged selves impose upon socio-political problems from a neutral perspective. Rather, it is concerned with a particular kind of subject. Mediation is concerned with the ontological constitution of what I shall refer to as an ethical comportment of openness.

1.4. Why Marcuse?

When shortly before his death Foucault put out the call for the necessity to develop an "aesthetics of existence" was he driven by the kind of political problems that arise from the considerations of diversity that I have been sketching?²⁶ Foucault's call for an aesthetics of existence seems to be a recognition of the limits of not only the liberal-bourgeois politics of selfishness, into which many who selectively appropriate his ideas so easily slide, but also the practical difficulties that arise from a plurality of worlds. Foucault once remarked that "... Hegel, insidiously perhaps, is close to us ... our anti-Hegelianism is possibly one of his tricks directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motionless, waiting for us".²⁷ Could this mean that Hegel's project of uncovering a form of *differentiated unity* still remains the political imperative of our time? Could this mean that an aesthetics of existence can not be framed in relation to any particular form of diversity, that an aesthetics of existence cannot be presented as a "truth in general", whether it be white or black, femininity or masculinity, this or that, but rather it must be presented in terms of an ethical comportment that embraces movement?²⁸ This Thesis will argue that this is indeed the case, i.e. if we are to value and protect the creation of diversity it is necessary to have a self-grounded ethical criterion that not only recognises the articles of faith or the rules of games, which are valued by particular social-forms, but also transcends specific forms of diversity. To simply describe the values

²⁵ M.Sandel (ed.), *Liberalism and its Critics*, New York, New York University Press, 1984.

²⁶ See M.Foucault quoted in A.McHoul and W.Grace, *A Foucault Primer*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1993, p.118. "From Antiquity to Christianity, we pass from a morality that was essentially the search for a personal ethics to a morality of obedience to a system of rules. And if I was interested in Antiquity it was because ... the idea of morality as obedience to a code of rules is now disappearing, has already disappeared. And to this absence of morality corresponds, must correspond, the search for an aesthetics of existence."

²⁷ M.Foucault, quoted in A.Sheridan, *Michel Foucault: The Will To Truth*, Routledge, London, 1980, p.3.

²⁸ It is plausible to suggest the kind problem I have been discussing underlies such comments by Foucault as: "It seems to me that the philosophical choice with which we find ourselves confronted at present is this one: we can opt either for a critical philosophy presenting itself as an analytic philosophy of truth in general, or for a critical thinking that takes the form of an ontology of ourselves or an ontology of the present. The latter form of philosophy, from Hegel to the Frankfurt School passing through Nietzsche and Max Weber, has founded a form of reflection in which I have tried to work."

M.Foucault, 'The Art of Telling the Truth', in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984*, Routledge, New York, 1988, p.95.

and truths within closed systems is not enough in a world where such systems are constantly terrorising one another. The practise of genocide is after all, also, a "language game".

As already stated, part of this argument is to accept Habermas's articulation of the central problem of Modernity, as outlined in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* - "the necessity of creating all that is normative out of itself as a historical problem." It is to present an ethical criterion as transcendent to the extent that it cannot be reduced to particular forms of historical being despite the fact that it must be embodied in historical forms. Yet, it is self-grounded to the extent that it emerges from within history as a consequence of human activity - it is not an external authority. However, it is important to be clear that this is not a search for a moral principle that will eventually secure universal consensus and application. Certainly, the search for a transcendent ethical criterion is also a search for a universal criterion (at least in the way that Habermas presents it). But its universality derives not from the fact that it is applicable in all circumstances, or that it can resolve all forms of social terror. Rather, it is universal in the sense that it refers to the fact that if problems of social and political terror are overcome, then the social actions, which have enabled a mediation, have embodied such a universal criterion. But even more than this, it will also be argued, that in order for all forms of socio-political diversity to come into being they must embody such a universal transcendent criterion. The emergence of the historical is grounded by, and presupposes, the presence of such a transcendent criterion.

As Hegel recognised, in order for such an ethical criterion to carry the kind of authority that the modern world requires it must go beyond mere consensus. For consensus rarely functions as an authority, but rather nearly always consents to an authority. Hegel's answer to this problem was to present his own problematic notion of the Absolute as a metaphysical authority, which comes into being through the activities of historical subjects. In this way Hegel connected ethical life to the metaphysical or ontological. This is to say, the authority of the universal aspect of ethical life derived from the fact it corresponded to the authority of the universal or *essential* aspect of all entities. Furthermore, for Hegel, there is a form of ethical being that knows this to be the case and directs its activities accordingly. This ethical form, Hegel called freedom. In so doing Hegel asserted a connection between the ethical and the ontological not simply in the sense of correspondence, but rather necessity. That is, in order for self-consciousness to embody freedom it *must* be of a particular kind. However, Hegel's notion of the absolute as a cognitive substance has some unacceptable authoritarian aspects for contemporary thought. Some of these aspects will be examined in the following chapters.

Another thinker who directly addresses all of these questions, in the light of post-Hegelian developments in Continental philosophy, is Herbert Marcuse. No more is this so than in Marcuse's early philosophical writings. It will be argued that the culminating text of this

period, *HO*, impacts directly upon the issues raised above. In this text Marcuse claims to have found within Hegel's early writings a compelling account of the universal grounding for all socio-political diversity (historical beings). This universal grounding is revealed in Hegel's notion of *Life* (which is to be understood as an ontological concept). Marcuse, under the influence of Heidegger, presents an analytic of *Life* as a process of becoming, or more specifically, as an open-ended-openness to the future. In presenting this radical open-ended theory of historicity, Marcuse thinks he is indicating a way out of the relativist dilemma that faces all those who assert forms of contextual truth. What's more, Marcuse thinks this way avoids collapsing into the authoritarian aspects of Hegel's Absolute (to be understood in this context as a proxy for any form of univocal realism). Marcuse argues that his analytic of *Life* opens the way for an ethical comportment that enables the continual development or *happening* of diverse entities and social worlds. Significantly, such an ethical comportment has no interest in universalising any specific historic world. Rather, it is a comportment that celebrates diversity itself through a process of *giving-up* and *becoming*. Universality is associated with the *process* of becoming rather than any specific content. Significantly, Marcuse suggests that such a process can be enacted in a way that is devoid of the kinds of terror described above. Furthermore, Marcuse associates such an ethical comportment with *authentic being* characterised by *freedom*. Such an ethical comportment is described as authentic precisely because it re-enacts the transforming process that constitutes reality. And not only is such a comportment aware that it is doing so, but it is also directed towards doing so.

To present the work of Herbert Marcuse in this way is not to claim that he has successfully overcome all the political and philosophical problems of modernity. It is, however, to suggest he directly confronted the central questions I have so far raised; the constitution of diverse worlds, why such worlds should be valued, and the possibility of an ethical comportment that enables the continual appearance of social diversity. In addressing these questions Marcuse insisted upon the importance of articulating an alternative life-form that is qualitatively distinct from a world characterised by instrumental reason, and social relations based upon terror. This point often seems lost on Marcuse's critics. Typical of such criticism is the suggestion that Marcuse and the Frankfurt School believe "... that socialism is nothing other than the constitution of the autonomous subject and that the only justification for the sciences is if they give the empirical subject (the proletariat) the means to emancipate itself from alienation and repression."²⁹ Such interpretations criticise Marcuse primarily on the basis that he presents some kind of naturalistic, or even biological, account of essential human being that has hitherto been repressed by socio-political institutions. Ultimately, Marcuse most certainly presents a theory of liberation that is directed towards overcoming forms of

social alienation and repression. However, far from being underpinned by some form of *a-priori* and ahistorical subject Marcuse's understanding of liberation asserts a radical form of historicism grounded by the theory of historicity. Yet, even among those sympathetic to Marcuse, the significance of his presentation of historicity often has been neglected. In order to continue to fill out this point, and establish the lines that this Thesis will differentiate itself, I will now examine Marcuse's early philosophical project.

1.5 Marcuse's Early Philosophical Project 1928-1932.

In the introduction it was stated that the central question that concerns this Thesis is the following; *Is there an ethical life-form that encompasses a universal criterion for social and political action whilst simultaneously allowing for the happening of social diversity?* In this chapter it was suggested that the process of advanced capitalism, which has become known as globalisation, provides the most recent imperative for addressing this question. That is, the process of globalisation has re-awakened an appreciation of the immediate incompatibility of various life-forms, and their increased destruction when the practice of terror is invoked to overcome conflict. In addressing why the outcome of life and death struggles between specific socio-political forms is of interest two distinct but associated reasons were implied.

Firstly, to the extent that people are able to lead meaningful lives they do so through the entire constellation of social practices and institutions that enable them to both engage their worlds, and which unify their worlds as worlds (such worlds often extending beyond the secular).³⁰ Indeed, it is precisely because such practices are in fact meaningful that life and death struggles emerge in the first place. The destruction by terror, in all its manifestations, of such meaningful social worlds has obvious existential consequences for those who "dwell" in them. How to overcome social differences without giving up what is most meaningful is then a practical dilemma of interest to all ethical peoples. However, the preservation of specific and meaningful social-forms should not be mistaken as necessarily entailing moving beyond the use of terror. Given the appropriate power, the preservation of a specific meaningful world can be achieved, in nearly all instances, through the annihilation and / or the assimilation of others.

Secondly, it was suggested that the concern for the destruction of diverse social worlds often involves a concern for diversity *per se*. This is not a concern for an abstract principle, but rather a claim that the meaningfulness associated within diverse ethical structures may well be

²⁹ J.Lyotard, *op.cit.* p.37.

³⁰ In broad terms we can associate these practices and institutions with Heidegger's notion of the *ontic*.

linked not only to individual social-forms but also to the process of creating these forms.³¹ Meaningfulness, as such, is associated with the creation and actualisation of different forms of existential transformation. This kind of concern often coalesces around accounting for, and promoting, various notions of authentic existence and freedom. Hegel's principle of subjectivity, Kierkegaard's becoming a New Being in Christ, and Heidegger's notion of authenticity would all be examples of this kind of existential transformation.³² Significantly, the meaningfulness of acts of existential transformation is located not simply in *this* specific self-consciousness, or in *that* New Being in Christ, but in the very process of becoming these kinds of ethical subjects. Furthermore, this process is considered to be necessarily a social process -it cannot be realised in terms of a disengaged individual (what is often referred to as bourgeois individualism). Concern for the destruction of such a creative process certainly involves compassion towards specific embodiments of diverse ethical lives (i.e., compassion towards concrete individuals and peoples). But it primarily involves a concern that goes beyond any one person, group of people, or even social world. It involves a concern for the constitutive process itself that enables the happening of diverse worlds.

In recent times, concern for this constitutive process has been directed towards the apparent reduction of social life to that which allows only for the happening of particular kinds of entities -those associated with, or complimentary to, the world of capitalism. Other social-forms (i.e., all that is autonomous from capitalism), which allow for the happening of distinctly different entities are terrorised out of existence. Such terror often occurs through the effective annihilation of distinct social worlds, that is through their "colonisation" by capital. Amongst others, Lyotard's defence of *le différent*, and his charges against the advocates of meta-theories, can be understood in this way. The terror of meta-theories is then evident at two levels. Firstly, at the level of terrorising specific diverse social-forms that people invest their existential meaningfulness, and secondly, meta-theories diminish or blunt the very creative and historical process by which such diverse forms come into existence and renew themselves.

However, even if it is granted that lives of existential transformation, which embody such notions as the dialectical becoming of self-consciousness (freedom) or authentic existence, somehow overcome terror and allow for the happening of diversity, why should such life-forms have any ethical priority? Undoubtedly, certain people find various versions of 'Being in Christ' the source of their meaningfulness in the world. But equally as many others would prefer the material security and comforts that are bestowed upon them as beneficiaries of

³¹ Once again, in broad terms, this is a move towards invoking Heidegger's notion of the *ontological*. A full discussion of the distinction between the *ontic* and *ontological* will take place in section 2.1 below.

capitalism. And even if one is deprived of such material goods, surely the struggle to attain them could become a meaningful quest? Furthermore, would not the involvement in such a quest seem to be a real possibility for most people associated with the capitalist world? Indeed, the quest for material goods seems to be one of the socially unifying aspects of capitalist society - it directs and determines the existence of a very large number of people and nations.

If then, we live in times which exclude invoking notions of external authority (bad metaphysics) to support ethical perspectives, and if the weight of history is with the continued expansion of a life-form that promotes the pre-occupation with material security at the expense of creativity, so what? Perhaps we simply need to learn to live with the fact that socio-political life, which is grounded in the historically contingent, excludes as many things as it enables? And if we want to participate in the things that our social times do enable perhaps we need to become more pragmatic? Reduced regions of diverse cultural creativity may well be simply the price we have to pay for increased material security and stability. Consequently, for many historicists, questions of the priority of one ethical form over another do not arise, but rather such historicists assert distinct ethical forms simply enable distinct ethical lives. And the predominant ethical form of the present is one that is directed towards material accumulation by establishing a nexus of social practices and institutions, which function in part by promoting an ethos concerned with material security. If something like this is the case why should an ethos concerned with creativity, at any level, have priority?

The above questions are to some degree restatements of the political problem of ethical relativism canvassed above. However, they are restatements that enable us to begin to appreciate that concepts such as Hegelian freedom, and Heideggerian authentic existence, whilst referring to particular kinds of life-forms, are also statements about reality itself. In order to comprehend what this claim involves the following Thesis will examine Marcuse's presentation of the concepts of freedom and authenticity in a way that is distinct from issues of individual morality. That is, it will be argued that such concepts are not dependent upon the internal or psychological attitude of individual selves, but are descriptions of how particular worlds, and the selves within those worlds, are constituted. Whilst, however, this is consistent with all forms of historicism, this position makes an additional move that attempts to go beyond historical relativism. For the claimed 'authenticity' that these life-forms refer derives from their identification with the fundamental (i.e., authentic, original, essential) structures of existence. It is in this sense that Marcuse's early philosophical project is directed towards overcoming historical relativism. Marcuse's early writings explicitly question whether there is a particular form of human existence that can be identified with the fundamental

³² In using these examples I am drawing on a public lecture given by R.Rorty, *Analytic Philosophy and Transformative Philosophy*, Australian National University, July 9, 1999.

structures of reality? And if there is such an ethical life-form, why should we choose to direct ourselves to such a life in preference to say a life of material security? Indeed, Kellner states;

Marcuse believed a phenomenological Marxism could overcome the dilemma of historical relativism...Marcuse seemed to believe that phenomenology could ground and explicate these fundamental structures, which would provide criteria that could determine the historical validity of Marxism or a given form of historical practice; i.e., that a given form of practice could be justified as a striving to overcome alienated forms of practice and to aim at the realisation of essential aspects of human being that the theory had validated.³³

In contrast to both sympathetic commentators, and the critics of Marcuse, it is my contention that Marcuse's early philosophical project culminated in *HO*.³⁴ I shall argue that it is in this text Marcuse presented the lines along which a synthesis of dialectics and historicity may be understood. This is to say, that whilst Marcuse's early philosophical essays identified the necessity for what Marcuse would call 'concrete philosophy', and whilst they sketched the outlines of this philosophy, the most coherent account of this project was Marcuse's *Habilitationsschrift*. Before addressing this text, then, it is important to address these early essays.

In the period leading up to the publication of *HO* in 1932, Marcuse published three major essays; 'Contributions to a Phenomenology of Historical Materialism' (1928), 'Concrete Philosophy' (1929) and 'On the Problem of the Dialectic' (1930).³⁵ During this period Marcuse is normally interpreted as attempting to synthesise certain aspects of Marxism with phenomenology, especially phenomenology as it was articulated in the work of Heidegger. Whilst not only critics and commentators of Marcuse, but also Marcuse himself, believed this to be a failed project, the above essays do succeed in clarifying why Marcuse thought this project to be socially and politically necessary.³⁶ In this section I shall follow both Kellner's and Katz's account of these early works in sketching out what this project involved. In so

³³ D.Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., p.60f.

³⁴ The details of this contrast will be the topic of the next section.

³⁵ There are in fact about a dozen essays and reviews which constitute this period. However, the above three essays are generally considered to contain the core of Marcuse's position. For a full bibliography of Marcuse's work see D.Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, pp.482ff.

³⁶ Schoolman provides a good summary of the kind of criticisms directed against Marcuse's early philosophy project. M.Schoolman, *The Imaginary Witness*, op.cit., p.1. The best account of how Marcuse eventually came to view this period is F.Olafson, 'Heidegger's Politics: An Interview with Herbert Marcuse' in R.Pippin, A.Feenberg, C.Weibel (eds.), *Marcuse: Critical Theory And The Promise Of Utopia*, MacMillan, New York, 1988. Clearly my position will oppose the view that Marcuse's early works were a mistake, despite Marcuse's own pronouncements

doing I will link it directly to the questions and concerns that have been raised up to this point.

It is of interest that in a recent edition of the *European Journal of Philosophy*, which was devoted entirely to Hegel's philosophical and social legacy, many of the questions raised in Marcuse's early writings have once again come to the forefront. For many philosophers there is no more pressing question than that of establishing an ethical criterion, or "concrete philosophy" of the kind that Marcuse was calling for seventy years ago. Charles Taylor sums up this need in the following way.

The problem is no longer the 'reality of the external world', or of 'other minds'. But now it is: how do we know that our local standards of reason, truth, right, are not just concoctions, with no more justification than any other different set which we might come across in contact with another culture? Or perhaps there is one right set of standards, but ours isn't it; how will we ever know this? The problem is that what seems to us the right grasp of things is taken by us to be truth, what seems just is taken as the right, what seems cogent is taken by us as following the demands of reason. But how can we be confident of this, if all such standards must arise within a historical society?³⁷

Before examining the kind of answers that Marcuse sought to give to the above questions, and which aspects of Marxism and phenomenology Marcuse sought preserve or abandon, it will be useful to address the question as to why Marcuse thinks this project is of importance. Kellner argues that the purpose of Marcuse's early essays was to attempt to synthesise Heidegger and Marx in order to "...create a new 'concrete philosophy' capable of serving as an instrument of radical social change. This enterprise would define Marcuse's entire intellectual project."³⁸ But why does Marcuse think such radical social change is necessary?

The short answer to this question is the predominance of alienation. In Chapter Three I shall give a detailed account of Marcuse's assertion that alienation, or what he refers to as the bifurcation of the world, is the original problematic of Hegel's philosophical efforts. It is the problematic that gives rise to the need for philosophy; "from a need of human life in a specific historical situation: that of division".³⁹ We shall see how for Marcuse this involves the drive to overcome the subject / object dichotomy through Heidegger's notion of being-in-the-world. Overcoming forms of alienation is, from the very beginning, a central theme in

³⁷ C. Taylor, 'Comment on Jurgen Habermas' 'From Kant to Hegel and Back Again', in *European Journal of Philosophy*, Number 7, Issue 2, 1999, pp.158-163.

³⁸ D.Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., p.38.

Marcuse's work. In a passage that summarises this role and points forward to some of Marcuse's later political writings, Kellner states;

If an examination of the concrete historical situation shows that the development of human powers and potentialities is not possible in a society in which 'personal powers are transformed into objective forces', then 'one's own activity becomes an alien power that stands over and against one'. Dominated by alien forces, the individual is 'robbed of the real content of life' (i.e. freedom, individuality, pleasure, etc.) and is reduced to the form of an 'abstract individual'. This picture portrays the 'existence of capitalist society that reveals the "reality of an inhuman existence" (*The Holy Family*) behind its ideological forms'. Marcuse argues that capitalist society obstructs and suppresses free human activity and calls for 'radical action' as a 'counter-movement' against the forms of alienated existence.⁴⁰

It is easy to see how in passages such as this Marcuse could be accused of simply believing "... that socialism is nothing other than the constitution of the autonomous subject and that the only justification for the sciences is if they give the empirical subject (the proletariat) the means to emancipate itself from alienation and repression."⁴¹ But this would be to greatly underestimate both Kellner's analysis and Marcuse's philosophy. Certainly, Marcuse does believe that socialism is identified with a life beyond alienation, and that the justification of social theory and practice is grounded in its ability to realise a world of freedom. But what this involves, as Kellner goes on to demonstrate, is considerably more complicated than what Lyotard indicates. Specifically, this Thesis will argue that it involves both a sophisticated account of particular instances of socio-political existence (the ontic), and an account of the essential structures that enable these distinct forms to come into existence (the ontological). One of the claims that this Thesis makes is that Marcuse insists that the authority that underpins the realisation of social and political freedom is to be found in the fundamental and essential structures of reality. However, it will also be argued that this does not involve establishing some kind of archetype model of reality, in the manner of the 'doctrine of reality', to which notions of freedom and authenticity must correspond. For Marcuse rejects the notion that reality has a thing-like character, or what Heidegger refers to as a *vorhanden* character, which can be disclosed independently of any context of meaning.⁴² The realisation of freedom and authenticity is not about establishing a form of conduct that can be repeated

³⁹ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.9.

⁴⁰ D. Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., pp.39f.

⁴¹ J. Lyotard, op.cit. p.37.

in a rule like fashion in all appropriate situations. Rather, Marcuse argues that reality is essentially characterised by movement or *motility*, and that authentic existence is able to grasp this fact and direct itself in a manner that re-enacts this motility. Authenticity is an ethical form that invokes the idea of re-enactment, it is not about correspondence nor representation. The details of Marcuse's presentation of reality as motility will be addressed directly in Chapter Four.

Much of Marcuse's account of a world characterised by alienation involves a continuation of Lukacs's concept of reification.⁴³ Indeed, it is through the concept of reification that Marcuse's call for the necessity of a "concrete philosophy" is to be understood. Like Lukacs, Marcuse presents the notion of reification in the context of Hegel's distinction between the "abstract" and the "concrete". To use Andrew Feenberg's words;

For Hegel, the "abstract" is not the conceptually universal but the part isolated from the whole to which it properly belongs. "Concrete" is the network of relations binding the parts to the whole.

In Marxist terminology, a methodology is "reified" if it insists on working with such "abstract" elements, refusing systematically to enlarge its horizons of explanation to the dimensions of the "concrete" wholes through which the parts take on their meaning and significance.⁴⁴

⁴² For a more detailed account of *vorhanden* and its relationship to ethical matters see F.Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of Mitsein*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, esp. pp.49-ff

⁴³ Lukacs's theory of reification is most clearly expressed in G.Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, Merlin Press, London, 1968, esp. pp.83-223 (Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat). Whilst Marcuse very favourably mentions this text in 'Contributions to a Phenomenology of Historical Materialism' he does not directly engage with Lukacs. However, it is clear that Marcuse has taken up Lukacs concern with reification. See B.Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, Verso, London, 1982, pp.62ff.

⁴⁴ A.Feenberg, 'The Bias of Technology', in R.Pippin, A.Feenberg, C.Weibel (eds.), *Marcuse: Critical Theory And The Promise Of Utopia*, MacMillan, New York, 1988, p.232. Although this Thesis does not engage directly with Feenberg's work, there are, I think, some interesting overlaps. Specifically, in 'The Bias of Technology', Feenberg can be read as presenting ODM in a manner that this Thesis would hope to complement. In his essay Feenberg argues that Marcuse's critique of technology incorporates but goes beyond previous Marxist critiques. In particular, Feenberg makes much of what he calls the "ontological moment" of Marcuse's theory. By this I take him to mean something similar to what I will argue is Marcuse's development of elements of Heidegger's ontology, especially issues concerning the "pre-scientific" basis of science. Feenberg associates this "pre-scientific" aspect with his concept of "formal bias". In arguing in this way Feenberg would seem to be lending support to the continued influence of Heidegger in Marcuse's later political works, and Marcuse's continued attempt to synthesise such influences into a "concrete philosophy". In fact he makes a statement to this effect on p.228f. I will return to the issue of technology in sections 6.4 and 8.2.

It is in this context that Marcuse accepts Lukacs's account of reification as the misconception, by many in society, that specific socio-political forms of existence are in some way natural and eternal.⁴⁵ Reification is the outcome of losing sight of the fact that social worlds are the result of a collective process of cultural formation, i.e., social worlds are not naturally occurring entities, but come into existence through the collective labour of humanity. Once the social constitution of distinct peoples, and distinct times, become reified, that is the origin of the socio-political world is forgotten, then the structures of society's "own activity becomes an alien power that stands over and against" it. Social structures and practises become abstracted from the network of relations within which they take on their meaning. For both Lukacs and Marcuse this transformation of social relations into relations between things is one of the defining characteristics of capitalism. Under capitalism the unrealised possibilities of socio-political life are crushed beneath the current institutions and practices of society, they are crushed beneath the "authority of the fact". Significantly, both Marcuse and Lukacs identify the fundamental cause of both reification and alienation as the perpetuation of the subject / object dualism - a dualism which is perpetuated not only by the forces of capitalism and the natural sciences, but also by orthodox (Scientific) Marxism.

However, as Barry Katz points out, Marcuse in approaching the problem of alienation chooses not to engage directly with Lukacs, but rather with Heidegger (and as we shall see, Hegel).⁴⁶ In effect Marcuse is linking up Heidegger's notion of 'falling' and inauthenticity with Hegel's notion of alienation, and Lukacs's notion of reification. And in so doing Marcuse is providing an historical account of inauthenticity, which will eventually find expression in his familiar critiques of commodity fetishism, the workings of the market place, the functions of mass media etc. Thus, Marcuse is attempting to re-situate Heidegger's account of 'falling' from its status as a structural aspect of fundamental ontology to that of a contingent characteristic of many historical socio-political forms. For Marcuse, inauthenticity, reification, and alienation can be overcome. However, in asserting this Marcuse is not abandoning fundamental ontology and insists that authentic life-forms in some way re-enact the structures of this fundamental ontology, in the manner outlined above, i.e., as creative motility.

For Marcuse the very notion of reification loses its impact outside of an account of reality that expresses the ontological structures of existence. For Marcuse it is not only the structures and practises of socio-political life that become reified, and consequently become points of alienation, it is also the extensional structures of reality that become reified. To some extent

⁴⁵ Kellner provides a good account of the influence of Lukacs on Marcuse's work in *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., pp.39ff.

⁴⁶ Katz speculates on a number of reasons why this may have been so which whilst providing some interesting biographical details do not concern us. B.Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, Verso, London, 1982, pp.62ff.

this implies that in order to appreciate how reified social and political life has become, we need to understand what life would entail in a non-reified, non-alienated sense. But how is this possible if the world is as reified and alienated as these critics suggest? One answer is that it is only possible by involving oneself in a continuous hermeneutical process.⁴⁷ What this means for Marcuse is that overcoming forms of alienation, by de-reifying the world, always takes place against a back-drop of also working out and grasping the fundamental structures of reality. And working out the fundamental structures of reality is in turn a process of grasping what it is to be in the world with others.⁴⁸ As Katz point out this process "... appears to be possible only as an ontology of human existence: the transcendental *essence* of (human) Being can be disclosed through a phenomenological analysis of the structure of *existence*."⁴⁹

The claim (made several paragraphs above) that reality itself is essentially creative motility opens the way for Marcuse to present an account of authentic existence that re-enacts this creative motility as an ethical comportment. Indeed, once it is appreciated that Marcuse comprehends reality as creative motility, then his notion of the radical act, which is the keystone of his presentation of authenticity, becomes clear. For Marcuse the radical act brings about fundamental change to social reality, and as such changes the ontic character of the world and its entities, including historical subjects. Whether it be at an individual level, or a socio-political level, the radical act aims at an authentic process of transformation. The radical act as such embodies Heidegger's notion of "resoluteness", a notion Kellner describes as "... a decision to modify one's inauthentic existence by embarking on a project of self-transformation through choosing authentic possibilities from the heritage."⁵⁰ However, Marcuse is not just making a point about how we live our lives in particular social circumstances. He is making a point about what he will claim are the *essential* characteristics of human existence, and correlating them to the deeper structures of reality. In order to appreciate this point it worth quoting, at some length, a passage from Katz, despite the fact that it takes us slightly ahead of ourselves.

Marcuse attempted to press beyond even the radical standpoint of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, however. Departing once and for all from the terrain of any possible Marxist orthodoxy, he extended the conception of the ontological centrality of labour into a standard against which *all* 'factual' historical configurations might be judged and condemned: 'Being human is always "*more*" than

⁴⁷ What this process involves will be the topic of Chapter Six.

⁴⁸ Below we shall see how this involves for Marcuse a reformulation of Heidegger's existential analytic into *Dasein* into an analytic of Life.

⁴⁹ B.Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, op.cit., pp.67f.

⁵⁰ D. Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., p.45. For a more detailed account of Marcuse's notion of the radical act see pp.41-45.

its present existence. It goes beyond every possible historical situation and precisely because of this there is always an ineliminable discrepancy between the two: a discrepancy that demands constant labour, and thus its ontological centrality, is based upon the conception of an 'essential excess of Being over existence', of an essential dimension of human being which can *never* attain fulfilment in the historical world. As such, it provides the ontological foundations for a transcendent political critique, for a 'permanent revolution' in a sense much nearer to Goethe's Faust than to the European proletariat.

Should I to any moment say:
Linger on! Thou art so sweet!
Then must you fasten me in chains,
Then my end I gladly meet.

Like Faust, Marcuse's philosophical standpoint builds in a fundamental irreconcilability with the prevailing reality principle, with the established society (as two of his later formulations would have it); he has laid the ontological foundations for a truly great refusal.⁵¹

In Parts Two and Three of this Thesis I shall argue that it is in *HO* that Marcuse develops his interpretation of the concept of labour or *activity* as the foundation for an understanding of authenticity, and a transcendent ethical criterion. And in the concluding chapter I will present a more detailed description of the socio-political possibilities that emerge from Marcuse's understanding of authenticity. Throughout, I shall continue to return to the role of Marcuse's notion of the absolute difference within being, or what Katz refers to as the "essential excess of Being over existence", the "irreconcilability with the prevailing reality principle". Here I wish only to stress that Marcuse's proposal for a concrete philosophy was concerned with providing a grounding for this kind of concrete ethical stance - a grounding for its claim to authenticity - rather than detailing what such authenticity may involve in particular concrete and historical circumstances. Certainly, authenticity continues to be worked out at the same time as the inquiry into its foundations (in the hermeneutical manner discussed above), however, in many respects concrete authentic existence is presupposed by Marcuse in his early writings only to re-emerge later in his career.

I mention this because Alfred Schmidt, one of the most strident critics of Marcuse's proposal for a concrete philosophy, like many others, does not accept this point. Certainly, he recognises that this was Marcuse's aim. "The conditions of concrete action must first be

⁵¹ B.Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, op.cit., p.78.

constituted on the basis of what Marcuse calls the 'foundations of existence'".⁵² But having recognised that Marcuse's proposal is directed towards an investigation of such foundations, i.e., moving beyond historical materialism, Schmidt centres most of his attack on Marcuse's divergence from historical materialism. Furthermore, it is a divergence that he thinks gives rise to unrestrained bourgeois individualism - a charge also directed at Marcuse by Paul Piccone.⁵³ Two points need to be made here. First, what ever problems Marcuse's proposal may encounter, its failure can not be declared on the basis that it does not accord to the dictates of historical materialism, which Marcuse is attempting to move beyond. Second, as will be taken up in the next section, Schmidt is correct in his claim that if Marcuse wants to move beyond liberal philosophy then his notion of authentic existence, and the radical act, will have to be distinguished from bourgeois individualism. However, I will argue that Marcuse's presentation of historicity enables him to move make more inroads into solving these problems than he is often credited.

How then does Marcuse think that a synthesis between Marxism and phenomenology will be able to provide this grounding? In providing a general answer to the above question, Kellner states:

For Marcuse, the method by which Marxists attempt to grasp movement, development and transformations of history is the dialectical method. This method sees 'every developing form in the river of movement' and perceives its object as historical: 'it considers its object as being in a state of becoming and passing away, as necessarily arising from a determinate historical situation; dialectics can understand its object only within the context of this situation'. Dialectical categories analyse the constitutives of human existence and describe historical development.⁵⁴

For Marcuse the dialectical method provides the most adequate account of historical change, and the means for assessing the particular forms of human existence that are involved in such change. However, the work of Lukacs had pointed out that orthodox or scientific Marxism, under the influence of the Second International, had all but abandoned a dialectical account of history, and in the opinion of Marcuse, re-established the subject / object dualism that was

⁵² A.Schmidt, 'Existential Ontology And Historical Materialism In The Work Of Herbert Marcuse' in R.Pippin, A.Feenberg, C.Weibel (eds.), *Marcuse: Critical Theory And The Promise Of Utopia*, MacMillan, New York, 1988, pp.47-67. I shall make some more comments on both Schmidt's and Piccone's criticism in the following section.

⁵³ P.Piccone & A.Delfini, 'Herbert Marcuse's Heideggerian Marxism', in *Telos*, No.6., (Fall 1970), p.36-47.

⁵⁴ D. Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., p.52.

the root cause of alienation and reification.⁵⁵ For Marcuse this took the form of what Katz describes as the "... mechanical subjugation of conscious political *praxis* to the inflexible dictates of historical laws."⁵⁶ But even beyond the problems identified with scientific Marxism, for Marcuse, Marxist dialectics ultimately fail to provide a satisfactory answer to why one form of change rather than another, and why one form of human existence rather than another, has any ethical priority. For instance in a society that did not value such things as equality, liberty, self transformation etc it is hard to see why socialism would have any ethical priority. Why value equality over inequality, liberty over material wealth creation, transformation over security? This is not to question that such values *are* valued when they have been woven into the social fabric or become part of the constitution of a people. But rather it is to raise the Nietzschean question of why value good? It is to question the foundations of our deepest ethical presuppositions. Indeed, Scientific Marxism can be interpreted from this perspective as inadequately struggling with these kind of issues (inadequately, because it falls back into asserting another form of realism). Furthermore, as Pier Aldo Rovatti argues, to participate in critique without foundation can only lead at best to the negative dialectics of Adorno and Horkheimer.⁵⁷ It is in an attempt to preserve the dynamics of the dialectical whilst also providing a transcendent grounding that Marcuse proposes a re-examination of phenomenology.

From its very beginnings phenomenology sought to put human knowledge and philosophy on solid foundations. Primarily in opposition to Neo-Kantian perspectives that asserted the inaccessibility of the things-in-themselves, Husserl put out the battle cry "to the things themselves". Husserl's phenomenology was aimed at grasping the atemporal and eternal essence of reality (albeit through the study of consciousness).⁵⁸ In order to achieve this it was central to Husserl's programme to overcome what he claimed was the false subject / object dichotomy and the complicity of modern scientific rationality in perpetuating this dualism.⁵⁹ It was not, however, towards Husserl but rather Heidegger that Marcuse looked for inspiration. Furthermore, it was towards Heidegger's penetration of what Katz describes as the "...essential, underlying structure of human existence [that] disclosed its fundamental and universal character."⁶⁰ This is not to say that Marcuse thought phenomenology to be without its own problems. Indeed, Marcuse was not interested in pursuing the ahistorical approach of phenomenology. He saw the inability of phenomenology to account for

⁵⁵ Marcuse was to take up this attack in more detail in 'On the Problem of the Dialectic', *Telos*, 27, (1977), pp.12-39.

⁵⁶ B.Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, op.cit.p.62.

⁵⁷ P.A.Rovatti, 'Critical Theory and Phenomenology', in *Telos*, No.15, (Spring 1973), pp.25.ff.

⁵⁸ D. Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., p.53.

⁵⁹ B.Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, op.cit.p.61.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.64.

historical change as a failure to adequately account for reality. Nonetheless, Marcuse took seriously the importance of what phenomenology was trying to do (i.e. move beyond the subject / object dualism in a way that preserved the notion of truth). Consequently, in much the same way as Marcuse would later interpret Freud, Marcuse proposed to historicise phenomenology. Kellner succinctly describes what Marcuse was trying to achieve through his proposed synthesis in the following words.

[Marxism] must go beyond the historical givens of the situation to ask 'whether there dwells within an integral meaning that endures through all historicity'. The implication is that where as traditional phenomenology cannot grasp change, development and process, dialectics overlooks the abiding, enduring, universal aspects of human existence. A dialectical phenomenology, Marcuse argues, aims at 'the being of historical human existence and to be sure as much in its essential structures as its concrete forms and configurations'. It encompasses all regions of meaning created by the human being ... Marcuse therefore seems to be inserting into dialectics some notion of phenomenological essence and hermeneutics that it is the task of a dialectical phenomenology to work out and clarify.⁶¹

I shall argue that the universal essence that Marcuse ultimately proposes is historicity itself. However, at present I wish to continue to sketch out Marcuse's early philosophical project and ask what Marcuse's concrete philosophy would look like. That is, I would like to give an overview of the kind of problems Marcuse thinks his project may contribute to overcoming, and the general form it would take. In order to do this I will say something more about Marcuse's notion of an authentic existence, i.e., non-alienated social freedom. In so doing I also wish to raise the question of the kind of authority that Marcuse invokes to assess and justify what would be considered as authentic.

It is important from the outset to be aware that when Marcuse invokes the possibility of a non-alienated form of social freedom he does not envisage some kind of harmonious life devoid of tension in the way that Jay seems to think.⁶² Indeed, we saw above in relation to Marcuse's notions of the radical act, permanent revolution, and the great refusal that Marcuse's position is in fact the antithesis of such harmony. Marcuse insists upon the 'absolute difference within Being', which enables the creative process of freedom to take place. What this involves is not yet our concern, but we need to recognise, as Pippin points

⁶¹ D. Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., p.57.

⁶² In reference to *Hegel's Ontology*, Martin Jay claims "Marcuse accepted the identity of subject and object that was the centre of Hegel's thinking." I will argue throughout this thesis that one of the central tenets of

out, that Marcuse's account of overcoming alienation does not involve, as Jay thinks, some kind of identity theory: the progressive development of the subject towards its harmonious identification with Being.⁶³ What then does an existence beyond alienation entail? As has been stated, for Marcuse non-alienated life entails something like being-in-the-world-with-others. Whilst it is the task of this entire Thesis to unfold what this involves we can state now, rather tautologically, that it is a form of existence that overcomes the subject-object dichotomy. That is, alienation is overcome by de-objectifying the world. De-objectification is understood, at this level, as overcoming the power of the world to stand over and against a worldless subject (i.e., reification). It will be argued that the process of de-objectifying the world and grasping the defining moment of being-in-the-world-with-others is the same continuous hermeneutical process that I referred to above as Hegel's principle of subjectivity. As Kellner points out, that for Marcuse this involves the explication of *historicity*. Historicity is understood as;

the process of historical movement that at once overcomes the subject-object dichotomy and the endless debate between idealism and materialism over the nature of reality by positing a single, unitary process of movement that encompasses subject and object, material conditions and consciousness, facts and values.⁶⁴

We need to note that it is not the debate over reality which is to be ended, but its formulation in terms of idealism or materialism. However, the point I wish to reiterate is that Marcuse is tying his notion of authentic existence to his comprehension of reality. But this raises the question as to what kind of authority is invoked in order to establish this truth, especially if both the empirical evidence of the present reality, and any form of other-worldly authority are deemed to be inappropriate. To a certain extent Marcuse answers this question by insisting upon the continuation and transformation of Kant's transcendental methodology (see section 3.3). However, I will also argue that the authority of Marcuse's position, which by its own definition is permeated by its own prejudices, is to be found in its ability to gather up and demand the involvement of opposing views. It is to be found in the plausibility of its presentation, and the direction it gives to opposing articulations, rather than its correspondence with a static form of logic or empirical facts. Ultimately, the authority of Marcuse's position will depend upon what, in relation to Heidegger's existential analytic, Charles Taylor calls a "picture which puts itself in motion."

Hegel's Ontology is Marcuse's thorough rejection of such an identity - a point supported by R.Pippin (see next footnote). M.Jay, *Dialectical Imagination*, Heinemann, London, 1973, p.73.

⁶³ R.Pippin, 'Marcuse On Hegel And Historicity', in R.Pippin, A.Feenberg, C.Weibel (eds.), *Marcuse: Critical Theory And The Promise Of Utopia*, MacMillan, New York, 1988, p.73.

⁶⁴ D.Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., p.44.

...the idea of background we can articulate figures not only as part of a new *picture* of the knowing agent. The series of philosophical arguments of Heidegger's existential analytic is itself such an articulation. The picture puts itself in motion. This pragmatic self-confirmation is what gives the existential analytic its peculiar force.⁶⁵

The authority of Marcuse's position will then stand or fall, first, with how convincing one finds his presentation of reality as essentially characterised by historicity, and the ability of human beings to align their own forms of existence with reality in a way that overcomes alienation. And second, as is the case with the authority of all forms of transformative philosophy, its authority is derived from its ability to transform reality in whatever particular way it describes. Transformative philosophy, so understood, is itself a radical act. In this sense one of the most successful of all transformative philosophies in modern times has been Marx's vision.⁶⁶ At this point I should also stress that the purpose of this Thesis is not to make a truth-claim about Marcuse's presentation, but rather to show how his notion of authenticity and freedom is dependent upon his ontological claims, and to further inquire into the relevance of Marcuse's ontology in regards to contemporary social life.

I would like to conclude this section with a quotation from Katz that summarises Marcuse's proposal for a concrete philosophy, and its enduring effect upon Marcuse's own thought.

In the broadest terms, phenomenology had penetrated to the essential, underlying structure of human existence and disclosed its fundamental and universal character; historical materialism, enriched by the *ontological* understanding of this structure of life, could grasp its concrete variations...

In identifying two planes or dimensions of human existence - the 'essential structure' [ontological -MC] uncovered by phenomenology and its 'concrete forms and configurations' [ontic -MC] as analysed by historical materialism - Marcuse had outlined the intellectual project that would occupy him in varying forms throughout

⁶⁵ C.Taylor, 'Engaged agency and background in Heidegger', in Guignon.C, *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p.334. Once again I refer the reader to section 6.2 for a more detailed discussion of this issue.

⁶⁶ Of course I am not suggesting that socialism has been realised in any tangible form, but rather that as a consequence of Marx's philosophy people did set about changing the world in a significant manner. At its most fundamental level *Hegel's Ontology* is considered, by Marcuse, to be an account of the primacy of action or praxis in the creation of the world.

the rest of his career: the effective integration of an essential standard of criticism with its material historical objects.⁶⁷

1.6 What distinguishes this Thesis from other commentaries on Marcuse?

One of the first to review *HO* was Theodor Adorno. He summed up his opinion with the following words;

[Marcuse -MC] is tending to move from concern with the meaning of being to disclosure of entities; from fundamental ontology to history-philosophy; from historicity to history.⁶⁸

Adorno's remarks and influence have come to characterise most commentators attitude to Marcuse's early philosophical works.⁶⁹ That is, if this period is deemed to be of any interest in coming to know Marcuse's philosophy it is from the perspective of expunging Heidegger's influence and placing Marcuse on the path to critical Marxism. Schoolman most strongly reflects this anti-Heidegger reading.

Marcuse looked back upon his early period as characterised by a painful mistake - the attention he had given to Heidegger's philosophy... Indeed, as will be shown, there are quite promising works of his early period that fall within the framework of his project but break completely with its Heideggerian dimensions.⁷⁰

And

From Marcuse's early writings it can be seen that he borrowed little from Heidegger - in fact, no more than an inspiration and a general focus.⁷¹

Kellner, who is one of the most authoritative scholars of Marcuse, suggests in reference to *HO*;

Marcuse's systematic interpretation of the basic categories of Hegel's ontology is probably of primary interest today to Hegel scholars... Since Marcuse was to drop his

⁶⁷ B.Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, op.cit.p.64.

⁶⁸ T.Adorno quoted by D.Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., p.76.

⁶⁹ Every account of *Hegel's Ontology* that I have read has included this quotation from Adorno's and invoked his authority on this issue. This includes; Kellner, Katz, Schoolman, Jay, Held, Pippin and Benhabib.

⁷⁰ M.Schoolman, *The Imaginary Witness*, op.cit., p.1.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.4.

early reading of Hegel and the ontological concern with 'historicity' ...we can forego a more detailed discussion of Marcuse's early essays on historicity and dialectics.⁷²

Katz, who is arguably most sympathetic to Heidegger's influence and significance, as well as to the continuity that Marcuse's early concerns were to have upon his entire career, primarily identifies the importance of this text as opening the way into the Institute of Social Research. But once again this opening was only made possible by Marcuse's perceived movement from Heidegger to Hegel.

Heidegger's thought weighed heavily upon Marcuse, but only because his 'appropriation' of it was critical and selective.⁷³

It is, however, the Heideggerian issues of the meaning of being, fundamental ontology, and historicity, that this Thesis will attempt to bring to the forefront in its interpretation of *HO*. Yet, I do not wish to overdo the role of Heidegger; this is a study of Marcuse's work. And as Katz indicates Marcuse displays significant dissent from Heidegger. This Thesis will highlight three areas within which this dissent emerges. The first is Marcuse's attempt to re-introduce ethics into a structure that Heidegger insisted was value-neutral. The second is Marcuse's attempt to collectivise Heidegger's individual subject. And the third is Marcuse's intention to move beyond the abstractions of Heidegger's philosophy by historicising it. The last two of these issues will be addressed in more detail in section 2.4

In drawing Heidegger's notion of historicity to the forefront my intention is to re-establish Heidegger's role in the synthesis that Marcuse originally embarked upon. It is to take seriously Marcuse's project as a synthesis that attempts to lift up and preserve aspects of both perspectives, and not simply to assimilate one into the other. Undoubtedly, there were good historical reasons why Heidegger has been pushed into the background, but as the recent resurgence in Heideggerian studies indicates, there is much in Heidegger's work that can be disconnected from his personal character.⁷⁴ This Thesis seeks, in part, to rehabilitate Heidegger's role in relation to Marcuse's work. But it is not only aspects of Heidegger's thought that I seek to raise up. Indeed, rather than interpreting Marcuse's early project as a synthesis between phenomenology and Marxism I will interpret its culmination as a synthesis between Heideggerian historicity and Hegelian dialectics.

⁷² D.Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., p.75 and p.77.

⁷³ B.Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, op.cit.p.67. Although Katz provides a good introduction to *Hegel's Ontology*, and connects it to Marcuse's proposal for a concrete philosophy in way that other commentators do not, it is only a few pages long.

⁷⁴ For some interesting comments in regard to this issue, and the role that historicity is claimed to have played in regards to Heidegger's Nazism see, F.Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics*, op.cit., p.13. Especially see footnote 17.

The choice to interpret Marcuse in this way is not arbitrary. The existence of *HO* provides significant justification. Certainly, Hegel's presence can be explained away in terms of functioning as a proxy for what would have been an unacceptable study of Marx (we need to remember that this text was Marcuse's *Habilitationsschrift* to be submitted to Heidegger).⁷⁵ Indeed, there is something in this explanation. Katz points out that Marcuse was already a Marxist when he went to Freiburg and from the beginning it was Marcuse's aim to radicalise Heidegger's philosophy. Furthermore, Heidegger had never responded favourably to Marcuse's attempt to extend the range of phenomenological analysis to political concerns.⁷⁶ But, as Kellner also points out, this was no casual reading of Hegel, it was a serious study that many Hegelian scholars, such as Richard Bernstein, think to be one of Marcuse's best works, hardly the stuff that would constitute a casual stand-in for Marx.⁷⁷ Furthermore, Kellner notes;

Marcuse never really explained why he involved himself in such intensive work on Hegel - a project that would be at the centre of his philosophical inquiries, in different contexts, for the next decade. Perhaps Marcuse thought that Hegel's dynamic and historical ontology, provided a corrective to Heidegger's more static and ahistorical ontology, which was not really able to conceptualise movement and change.⁷⁸

It is my position that something like this is indeed the case, especially in respect to what Marcuse found as the unacceptable abstraction of Heidegger's notion of *Dasein* (see section 2.4). Given the intent of Marcuse's early essays, to explore the problem of accounting for concrete historical change, whilst uncovering the essential structures of existence, it should come as no surprise that *HO* was a continuation of this project. I will argue that central to Marcuse's attempt to find a grounding for authentic, non-alienated social freedom was the working out of the correlation between authentic existence, historicity, and fundamental ontology. I will argue, that it is Marcuse's account of historicity that both links and grounds authentic existence with fundamental ontology. Furthermore, despite the fact that Marcuse continually invokes the notion of historicity in his early essays he did not work out, or at least express, a full account of what historicity entails until his *Habilitationsschrift*. It is, then, the

⁷⁵ Both Kellner and Jay offer this suggestion. *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., p.69, footnote 4. M.Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*, op.cit., p.28.

⁷⁶ B.Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, op.cit.p.66.

⁷⁷ Bernstein made reference to Hegel's *Ontology* as being the most 'brilliant' of Marcuse's writings as passing comment in a more general article concerning Marcuse. I am not aware that Bernstein has written anything of more detail concerning this text. See R.Bernstein, 'Herbert Marcuse: An Immanent Critique', *Social Theory and Practice*, vol.1, no.4 (Fall 1977) p.97. See also D.Kellner, *Ibid.*, footnote 40, p.400.

⁷⁸ D.Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., p.69.

contention of this Thesis that *HO* is precisely Marcuse's attempt to clarify historicity as the temporal character of both authenticity and reality. It would seem likely that it is because Marcuse was still working out this concept within *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity* that Benhabib is able to claim that nowhere within this text does Marcuse explicitly define historicity, which "...adds to the obliqueness if not the obscurity of some of his intentions."⁷⁹ A remarkable point given the title of the text alone. Whilst I agree with Benhabib, I think there is more than enough in this text to appreciate what Marcuse's understanding of historicity involved. Part of the work of this Thesis will be to endeavour to overcome some of Marcuse's obliqueness in respect to historicity.

For Benhabib, one of the most oblique aspects of Marcuse's presentation of historicity is an unresolved tension that she claims runs through *HO*.

The issue can be put as follows: According to the Diltheyan reading, the term 'historicity' is only meaningful when viewed in relation to Life's *objectivations*, but according to the Heideggerian analysis, historicity derives from temporality, from the essential being-toward-death and finitude of the individual Dasein.⁸⁰

This certainly does seem to be a potentially serious concern for Marcuse's text. For if Marcuse is committed to Heidegger's notion of historicity, a notion that is grounded in the finitude of Dasein, how then can Marcuse characterise Hegel's dialectic, which is the ground of reality, in terms of the theory of historicity? To do so would surely mean that Marcuse is reading a characteristic of humanity back into reality itself. And to do so must surely reduce Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel to another form of subjective idealism. Whilst I agree with Benhabib that this is a fundamental tension within Marcuse's work, I will argue that Marcuse is able to avoid collapsing into subjective idealism by reinstating and re-interpreting Hegel's notion of the absolute in terms of Life rather than cognitive substance, whilst at the same time arguing that Life is itself a subject.

The discussion surrounding historicity, within this Thesis, will serve to distinguish my interpretation from the three standard works that treat, in any detail, Marcuse's early work.⁸¹

⁷⁹ S.Benhabib, 'Translator's Introduction', in *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.xxvi.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.xxvi.

⁸¹ There are of course many other works that give a brief account of Marcuse's early period such as D.Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1980, ch.8. However, most of these works tend to refer and to reiterate either Katz, Schoolman or Kellner. Whilst Jay's history of the FS was written earlier than these works he also emphasises Marcuse's conscious attempt to distance himself from Heidegger, and nowhere does he say anything about the importance of historicity as a temporal structure. M.Jay *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-50*, Heinemann, London, 1973, pp.28,71-80, 91, 121-123.

These works are the already cited commentaries of Kellner, Katz and Schoolman. Whilst I am in general agreement with both Kellner's substantial presentation of Marcuse's work, and Katz's excellent biography, my position in regards to Marcuse's early work is somewhat different. Specifically, in regards to Kellner, I find his defence of Marcuse's work as an attempt to revitalise Marxism detracts from the themes I wish to investigate. This is not to say that I disagree with Kellner in relation to Marcuse's Marxism, nor is it some kind of attempt to strip Marx out of Marcuse's work. Both positions would be absurd. But as indicated in the quotation above Kellner foregoes a "detailed discussion of Marcuse's early essays on historicity and dialectics." And the same can be said for Katz. Significantly, in both these works, what mention there is about the character of historicity as the temporal axis of existential ontology, carries little explanation. Yet, it is precisely historicity, understood as a temporal axis, that is the centre of Marcuse's study, and which I will argue provides the foundation for his understanding of a concrete philosophy. To this extent I see my work as contributing to both Kellner's and Katz's work rather than refuting it. Significantly, my position, like both Kellner's and Katz's, seeks to emphasise the social, or "we-like", character of authenticity in a way that opens up possibilities for individuals without over-emphasising the primacy of the individual as an atomistic self.

It is in regard to the primacy of the individual that I take issue with Schoolman. Schoolman in the main interprets Marcuse's early project as a form of radical liberal politics - a position which I reject.⁸² Furthermore, Schoolman claims that it is "through the theory of historicity the individual had become the new foundation upon which Marcuse placed the Marxist theory of revolution."⁸³ Whilst Schoolman certainly has some insightful things to say about historicity and its correlation with labor, which I will address in Chapter Seven, his anti-Heideggerianism leads him to overlook the temporal dimension of historicity. Without this dimension it is of no surprise that in effect Schoolman collapses historicity into historicism (see section 2.3). Significantly, it is Schoolman's over-inflation of the individual that leads him to account for historicity in the following terms.

By identifying factors that dispose the individual to action, the conception of historicity begins to chart progress toward the formation of a socialist consciousness. In spite of social relations of domination, the theory of historicity maintains, the enslaved individual, the 'bondsmen' in Hegel's terms, possesses attitudes toward existence that potentially undermine the perpetuation of domination as much as they actually support it. Historicity thus offers the

⁸² For a clear statement of Schoolman's reading of Marcuse as a radical liberal see *The Imaginary Witness*, op.cit., p.36.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.351.

possibility of envisioning an end to the Marxist dilemma. The individual may be heavily burdened by the mystifications of ideology, but at a deeper level of existence he is simultaneously disposed to a radically different and unfettered social experience.⁸⁴

Schoolman's position ultimately collapses into a variant of asserting the primacy of a classical liberal self, as an autonomous disengaged individual. As such Schoolman's position is diametrically opposed to the one outlined in the previous section. Indeed, the inherently conservative leanings of Schoolman's position are further revealed when he claims:

In Marcuse's estimation reification is not the crucial issue for theoretical inquiry. What is to be decisive in the historical situation that Marcuse is investigating are *not* the factors that inhibit radical action and a critical perspective of the society.⁸⁵

Against such, Schoolman-type interpretations of Marcuse as a radical liberal, that ultimately asserts the essentiality of humanity in ahistorical, *a priori*, or even in biological terms, this Thesis will emphasise Marcuse's radical historicism.⁸⁶ But, as already indicated, Marcuse is no historical relativist. What underpins Marcuse's historicism is the theory of historicity. The distinction between historicism and historicity will be one of the first tasks of the following chapter. However, the point being made here is that whilst such a position certainly locates and embodies authenticity and freedom in the individual, it does so in the "we-like" manner of being-in-the-world-with-others (*Mitsein*).

The interpretation that Schoolman gives to Marcuse's use of historicity is the very kind of interpretation that such critics as Piccone and Delfini attack in Marcuse's work. Indeed, rather than the overcoming of alienation occurring as a collective act, Schoolman's position (ironically like Heidegger's unmodified position) suggests it is an individual concern. In presenting such a position Schoolman is open to the same charges that Piccone and Delfini aim at Heidegger and implicitly at Marcuse.

Thus salvation in Heidegger is readily attainable within capitalism - or, for that matter, within any system whatever: it is only a matter of existential determination. Since, however, only a few have the inner strength (and economic privilege) to make this existential choice, not everyone will be able to return to *Sein*, but only the elect. In short, the proletariat is alienated and relegated to the existence of *Das Man*

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.8.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.8. My emphasis.

⁸⁶ To accept Schoolman's position in regards to this issue opens Marcuse to precisely the charges that Lyotard directs at the Frankfurt School. See section 1.4 above.

not because of objective socio-historical conditions (capitalism), but because of his own spinelessness. It is not surprising that Heidegger's philosophy has been called the most sophisticated elaboration of bourgeois apology yet devised and consequently, very likely to blossom in the US in the coming years as presently accepted apologies become increasingly more untenable.⁸⁷

What ever relevance this rather polemic reading of Heidegger may have to Schoolman's individualism, it is not applicable to how I shall present Marcuse. Whilst it is not my intention to engage with Piccone and Delfini on this issue, it is my assertion that their criticism is not applicable to Marcuse, primarily because they too do not appreciate what Marcuse's understanding of historicity entails. They do not appreciate that for Marcuse historicity refers to the fundamental temporal axis of life, and that the authentic existence Marcuse seeks to realise is only possible within a social context. Whilst I will argue in the concluding chapter that Marcuse's position certainly opens up many more possibilities for non-alienated life than what dogmatic Marxists who can not see past total and instantaneous socio-political revolution may think, such possibilities are always social. This Thesis will maintain that there is nothing about Marcuse's position that entails radical liberal individualism. Whilst it is possible that it is not a matter of lacking appreciation, but rather the fact Piccone and Delfini simply do not agree with the concept of historicity, there is no evidence in their paper to suggest this. For despite attacking the notion of historicity throughout their paper nowhere do they refer to whether or not historicity adequately accounts for the temporal dimension of the world, or whether this dimension is of significance. Nor do they have anything to say about its relationship to historical entities.

The most substantial criticism of Marcuse's proposal for a concrete philosophy is presented by Schmidt. Whilst Schmidt is one of the few critics who sees *HO* as a direct continuation of Marcuse's earlier essays, he has little to say about it and instead concentrates entirely upon Marcuse's early essays.⁸⁸ Even though Schmidt takes the problem of historical relativism seriously, and recognises the importance of the problem that Marcuse is drawing attention, his anti-Heideggerianism serves as an intellectual obstruction. Schmidt charges both Heidegger and Marcuse with individualism, and refuses to accept that authenticity is anything more than the "... most paltry determinations, privatised and irrationalised in a Kierkegaardian manner."⁸⁹ Schmidt's basic objection to Marcuse's early project is that Marcuse is too

⁸⁷ P. Piccone & A. Delfini, 'Herbert Marcuse's Heideggerian Marxism', in *Telos*, No6., (Fall 1970), p.40.

⁸⁸ A. Schmidt, 'Existential Ontology And Historical Materialism In The Work Of Herbert Marcuse', *op.cit.*, p.48.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.50.

Heideggerian, and that Heidegger has produced only an "empty metaphysics of history."⁹⁰ Schmidt is charging both Heidegger and Marcuse with presenting an empty abstractness that cannot possibly provide the foundation for a concrete philosophy. However, Marcuse himself recognises this abstraction in Heidegger's work, and it is for this very reason that he insists that it must be synthesised with a philosophy of dialectics. If, as I have suggested, Marcuse's early essays are primarily attempts to clarify the need for a concrete philosophy, rather than provide the detail of such a philosophy, then it would seem that Schmidt's criticism misses the point. For whilst Marcuse's project certainly involves moving beyond the abstractness of aspects of Heidegger's philosophy it also involves establishing a criterion that cannot itself be reduced to the determinations of concrete life (see section 2.1). Marcuse's call for a concrete philosophy is a call for establishing the ground of an authentic life-form. As such his early essays are not an attempt to articulate what this form of authenticity would entail. Even if Schmidt's criticism is relevant to Marcuse's early essays, it is my contention that *HO* is intended to address precisely these kinds of problems.

Schmidt also draws attention to the fact that Marcuse's early essays fail to develop his understanding of historicity - a point I concur with. "...Marcuse uses the term 'historicity' indiscriminately to mean either 'real history,' or in an uncharged sense, the 'historical character' of a thing."⁹¹ As I have already indicated, it is my position that Marcuse did not adequately work out his understanding of historicity until *HO*. However, despite drawing attention to this fact, nowhere does Schmidt himself propose a more comprehensive account of historicity. This is of course not surprising, because historicity is not a concept that many Marxists are interested in grasping, which is part of the reason why Marcuse proposed the need for a concrete philosophy.

The point that I have been making in all these examples is that the anti-Heideggerian spirit, which began with Adorno, and that has dominated much of the commentary and criticism of Marcuse's early work, may well have served to mask some of the most insightful aspects of Marcuse's project. Of course the details of Heidegger's presence in Marcuse's work has been pointed out by all these thinkers, and often to an exhaustive extent. But the prime objective of doing so, in nearly all instances, has been to either discredit Marcuse's position or demonstrate that his flirtation with Heidegger was a youthful indiscretion that he soon moved beyond. As has also been noted, this spirit has been re-enforced by Marcuse's own renunciation of Heidegger. Whilst it is possible to understand this anti-Heideggerianism as

⁹⁰ Schmidt quoted by R. Pippin, "Marcuse On Hegel And Historicity" in *Marcuse: Critical Theory and the Promise of Utopia*, op.cit., p.75. Pippin also points out Schmidt's concentration on Marcuse's earlier essays to the detriment of *Hegel's Ontology*.

⁹¹ A. Schmidt, 'Existential Ontology And Historical Materialism In The Work Of Herbert Marcuse', op.cit., p.51.

both a consequence of Heidegger's personal politics, and the dominant position that Marxist thought has held over critical philosophy, this is not our concern. In making this statement I am not denigrating the importance of Marxist thought. But rather in concert with the Frankfurt School I am simply recognising that despite Marx's extraordinary contributions to western thought, he also has his equals, which include Hegel and Heidegger. It is to Marcuse's credit that he had enough intellectual generosity to take all three of these great minds seriously. Unfortunately, this attitude has not been reciprocated by some of Marcuse's and Heidegger's critics. Consequently, there has been almost little attempt until recently to identify the presence of Heidegger as a positive and creative aspect of Marcuse's philosophy, which is to be celebrated rather than hidden or rejected. Specifically, there has been very little attempt to grasp what the notion of historicity means in Marcuse's work, or what role it plays in attempting to break beyond the scepticism of historical relativism.

The two philosophers who are explicitly sympathetic to Heidegger's presence are Benhabib and Pippin.⁹² I have already addressed the central concern of Benhabib and will refer to her work throughout this Thesis. I will also draw upon Pippin's essay throughout, especially as a source of explanation. Pippin has two general concerns regarding *HO*. First, that "...the feared Hegelian Absolute moment has not at all been excluded."⁹³ Pippin is referring here to the emergence of an ahistorical perspective that somehow claims ethical priority over all other historical perspectives, i.e., the re-emergence of an ahistorical form of realism.

The realization of historicity is not *itself* one among many of the continuous "historizings" of human spirit. Even at such a starkly abstract level, it is the "riddle of history" solved and which knows itself solved. It is at least *the* attainment of the possibility of human freedom, and it is an attainment that seems strictly inconsistent with the ontological claims made throughout the unavoidably historical character of *all* human self-consciousness.⁹⁴

The realisation of historicity or emergence of an authentic and free form of being that has ethical priority, however, is precisely the intent of both Hegel's and Marcuse's work. Of course the crucial point is whether this ethical perspective can be presented in a way that is consistent with its own claims and ontology. Against Pippin I will argue that Marcuse intentionally raises Hegel's concept of Life to the status of the Absolute, but in so doing Marcuse claims to remain within the boundaries of history.

⁹² Both Pippin's essay *Marcuse on Hegel and Historicity* and Benhabib's *Translator's Introduction* treat Heidegger's influence much more sympathetically.

⁹³ R. Pippin, 'Marcuse On Hegel And Historicity', op.cit., p.80

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.80.

The second concern that Pippin has is that despite Marcuse's efforts this work does not provide a positive account of "...how Marcuse thinks the critical appropriation of the past demanded by the consequences of the historicity thesis is to be explained."⁹⁵ This criticism, like Benhabib's (see above) is certainly a serious one, and it is one that Marcuse did not directly address in *HO*. However, in agreement with Pippin (and in contrast to Benhabib) I will maintain that the attempt to detail what this form of concrete freedom would entail, and its correlation to historicity, is one of the enduring aspects of Marcuse's early project. Pippin argues that Marcuse "... never wholly abandons the views concerning historicity apparent in his first book on Hegel and that such a theme is essential to his own view of the possibility of negative or critical thinking."⁹⁶ Furthermore, Pippin claims that the issues that Marcuse addressed in this text "...must in general be faced and dealt with if the foundations of Critical Theory itself can be defended."⁹⁷ To this extent the final chapter of this Thesis will take up Pippin's suggestions of how Marcuse's work on historicity can be interpreted in his later writings, and how it may be extended by contemporary critical theory.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.88.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.88.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.69.

Chapter Two: Historicity as the Starting Point and Goal of Marcuse's Work.

Having outlined the character of Marcuse's early philosophical writings it now needs to be established how *HO* continues this project. In this chapter I shall begin by introducing the key concepts of Marcuse's text, i.e., *ontology*, *Life* and *historicity*. Following the introduction of these concepts I shall examine why Marcuse chose, in opposition to Heidegger's notion of *Dasein*, to conduct his inquiry into fundamental ontology through an analytic of Hegel's concept of *Life*. In the final section of this chapter I shall examine certain criticisms that have been raised against the type of re-interpretation of Hegel that Marcuse offers.

Marcuse opens *HO* with the following statement;

This work attempts to disclose and ascertain the fundamental characteristics of historicity.

Historicity is what defines history and thus distinguishes it from 'nature' or from the 'economy.' Historicity signifies the meaning we intend when we say of something that it is 'historical'. Historicity signifies the meaning of this 'is,' namely the meaning of the Being of the historical.

With respect to the historical, therefore, the problem is the manner in which it *is*. The question is not history as a science or as the object of a science but history as a mode of Being.

We inquire into the *happening* (*das Geschehen*) or the motility of this form of being. This line of questioning is not arbitrary: it is suggested by the word 'history' (*Geschichte*). What is historical (*geschichtlich*), happens (*geschichte*) in a certain manner. History will be our problem as a form of motility. It will be argued that a specific form of motility is constitutive of the being of the historical.¹

In this opening passage Marcuse has made his intentions clear. He is not concerned to inquire into any specific historical world, into this or that specific culture. Rather, Marcuse wishes to put aside the objects of history and focus upon what enables the emergence of social-diversity itself, what it is that grounds the very presence of historical worlds. Marcuse's question is an *ontological* question, a question concerning the '...meaning of the Being of the historical.'

¹ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, p.1.

Coming towards an initial appreciation of what Marcuse understands by *ontology* and its correlation to the other key concepts of *Life* and *historicity* will be the first task of this chapter. A more detailed account of these concepts will emerge in Chapters Three to Five.

Marcuse's introductory paragraph announces the rejection of the notion that any such grounding could have a thing like character, a *vorhanden* character. Instead, Marcuse directs his inquiry into a possible grounding that is characterised by motility. The form of motility that Marcuse claims to be essential to historical beings is the German notion of *Bewegtheit*.² Whilst this term is translated throughout the text simply as motility it is important to be aware that it implies a disposition or propensity towards movement. At the risk of being tautological, Marcuse is drawing our attention to the fact that in order for the historical to continually renew itself, in order for diverse social-forms to appear, historical entities must be characterised *essentially* by movement.

2.1 *Ontology*

The observation that Marcuse is concerned with an ontological inquiry into the grounding of the historical raises the obvious question as to how Marcuse deploys the term ontological. This is an important question for as Robert Pippin points out, and as any reader of Marcuse is aware, Marcuse uses the term *ontology* throughout his writings.³ It is therefore of interest, not only in interpreting *HO* but also in coming to an understanding of some of Marcuse's later writings, to appreciate what Marcuse means by this concept. Of course it is not possible to dismiss Marcuse's understanding of ontology in a two-line definition. In fact, much of this Thesis (like *HO*) is oriented specifically towards the task of grasping the meaning of ontology. However, in order to begin somewhere I will follow both Robert Pippin's and Seyla Benhabib's approach, which is to indicate Marcuse's Heideggerian perspective.⁴

It was suggested in Chapter One that ontology has traditionally been understood to be associated with the identification and grasping of entities into distinct sorts or kinds. The common character that enables the classification of entities into various kinds is traditionally referred to as a universal. Ontology has traditionally been concerned with the hierarchal ordering of different kinds of universals. More specifically, ontology has been concerned

² S. Benhabib, *Ibid.*, p.335. In proclaiming that this form of motility is the essence of Being, Marcuse is highlighting what he argues is the 'historical-problematic origin of the dialectic.' This is to say Marcuse does not claim to have established anything new by pointing out the relationship between motility and Being, but rather claims to be continuing a line of thought that goes back until at least Heraclitus. See H. Marcuse, 'On the Problem of the Dialectic', in *Telos*, No 27 (Spring 1976), pp.12-40.

³ R. Pippin, 'Marcuse On Hegel And Historicity', in R. Pippin, A. Feenberg, C. Weber (eds.), *Marcuse: Critical Theory And The Promise Of Utopia*, MacMillan, New York, 1988, p.70.

⁴ S. Benhabib, 'Translator's Introduction' in H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, p.ix-xi.

with an investigation into the highest form of universal that is supposed to function as the ground of all beings. Ontology as such is described as an investigation into 'being *qua* being' as some kind of 'pure being'. But this is *not* how Marcuse understands and deploys the term ontology.⁵ Yet, to the extent that Marcuse and Heidegger have chosen to continue to use the term ontology, rather than abandon it completely, there must be something in common with its use by the 'tradition'. What connects Marcuse's Heideggerian understanding of ontology to that of the tradition is the investigation into the 'ground' of beings, the ground of specific entities, but in a manner that rejects the possibility of pure being.

What then distinguishes Marcuse's inquiry from traditional ontology? First, Marcuse's assertion that the ground of historical entities cannot itself be an entity, it cannot be a thing-like substance, but must be a form of motility. Second, Marcuse distinguishes his understanding of ontology from the tradition by working from within a post-Kantian framework. I shall return to Kant's influence upon not only Marcuse's but also Heidegger's and Hegel's presentation of ontology throughout this Thesis, and specifically in section 3.3.⁶ Here I shall make only a brief statement to help clarify Marcuse's general use of the concept ontology.

In reference to Marcuse's understanding of ontology, Pippin makes clear Marcuse fully accepts Kant's demolition of the dogmatic tradition's inquiry into 'being itself', i.e. Marcuse accepts the limitations of philosophical knowledge. But this does not mean that Marcuse, or for that matter Kant, restricted the legitimacy of philosophy to empirical studies. In accepting Kant's destruction of dogmatic metaphysics, Marcuse accepts that whilst any possible 'ground' of historical entities cannot be reduced to human experience, it must at the very least account for human experience. Furthermore, Marcuse accepts, that whilst the ground of historical entities is in no way the creation of human beings, it nevertheless can only be approached through the experience of human beings. As such, Marcuse begins his inquiry into this 'ground' by accepting Kant's recognition that the unity of the world is in no case given by the objects themselves. Indeed, it was precisely in recognising this fact that Kant was able to initiate his Copernican revolution and separate modern philosophical inquiry from dogmatic metaphysics. Kant revolutionised philosophy by inquiring not into the unity of the world, but rather into the kind of subject that is capable of experiencing a unified world. Dostal describes Kant's breakthrough in the following words.

⁵ R.Pippin, 'Marcuse On Hegel And Historicity', op.cit., p.70.

⁶ In the second part of 'On the Problem of the Dialectic', which Kellner sees as a summary of *Hegel's Ontology*, Marcuse clearly distinguishes Kant's 'transcendental synthesis', and the dialectic grasped as motility, as the defining characteristics of Hegel's ontology. See H.Marcuse, 'On the Problem of the Dialectic', in *Telos*, No 27 (Spring 1976), p.26.

Kant called his revolutionary philosophical method transcendental "I entitle *transcendental* all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the *mode* of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be a *priori*."⁷

Significantly, then, whilst Kant's philosophy sought to inquire into the character of the empirical subject, and is often credited with establishing the presuppositions upon which the empirical sciences rely, Kant's inquiry was not itself an empirical inquiry.⁸ Rather Kant established the character of the transcendental ego through rigorous philosophical reflection. This is to say, that Kant's notion of the transcendental ego, which purports to account for the kind of experiences rational beings have in the world, is not itself established empirically, but rather *a priori*.⁹ And it is in this regard that Heidegger and Marcuse, like Hegel before them, both follow Kant's rejection of dogmatic metaphysics, and continue his transcendental methodology (the investigation of synthetical *a priori* statements). With the influence of Kant's transcendental methodology in mind, Kellner's description of Marcuse's deployment of the term ontology begins to take shape.

Ontology is the attempt to lay bare 'the fundamental structures of human experience.' It was this structural-categorical concept of ontology that pre-occupied Marcuse, and in his early philosophical studies he searched for the fundamental structures of human existence, society and history, which he believed were necessary to provide adequate foundation for social theory.¹⁰

It is in regards to providing an adequate foundation to social theory that Pippin suggests that Marcuse follows Heidegger in two fundamental ways.¹¹ First, Marcuse accepts Heidegger's distinction between the *ontic* and the *ontological*. In the previous chapter I indicated that Marcuse's early philosophical project could be seen as attempting to synthesise, or more accurately correlate, these two spheres. It was suggested that Marcuse associated the insights of Marxist dialectics with the *ontic*, and the insights of phenomenology with the *ontological*. In support of this position I quoted Katz.

⁷ R.J.Dostal, 'Time and phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger', in C.Guignon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, op.cit., p.143.

⁸ One of the best presentations of Kant's relationship to both metaphysics and the empirical sciences can be found in R.G.Collingwood, *An Essay On Metaphysics*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1940, especially Part IIIB.

⁹ For a more detailed account of this type of argument see R.J.Dostal, 'Time and phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger', op.cit., p.144

¹⁰ D.Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., p.70.

¹¹ R.Pippin, 'Marcuse On Hegel And Historicity', op.cit., p.71.

In the broadest terms, phenomenology had penetrated to the essential, underlying structure of human existence and disclosed its fundamental and universal character; historical materialism, enriched by the *ontological* understanding of this structure of life, could grasp its concrete variations.¹²

The second way that Pippin identifies that Marcuse follows Heidegger concerns the priority of the ontological in relation to the ontic. Marcuse argues that any relation to any individual being (the ontic) always presupposes an orientation to Being (the ontological). Such an orientation distinguishes the constitutive aspect of the world in which any one being "is what it is". To this extent Marcuse accepts Heidegger's formulation that the problem of being, of what *is*, cannot be asked simply as "What is there?" In order to understand "what is" it is necessary to approach the question of the "meaning" of being. Or to use Pippin's paraphrase of Heidegger, it is necessary to pose this question "within the 'horizon' of that being for whom Being can be an issue, can have a meaning". This is in no way to down play the importance of individual or regional forms of existence, but it is to assert the priority of the ontological. The relationship between the ontic and the ontological, and the priority of the ontological is captured by Benhabib in the following terms.

Heidegger had clarified how the investigation of the question of Being takes priority over the questions of the individual sciences. All sciences proceed from a demarcation and initial fixing of the areas of their subject matter. But "the basic structures of any such area have already been worked out after a fashion in our prescientific ways of experiencing and interpreting the domain of Being in which the area of the subject matter is itself confined." All sciences thus gain access to the subject matter by projecting a certain mode of experiencing and interpreting their object domain. These experiential and interpretative assumptions form the hermeneutical presuppositions of any horizon of inquiry. Being is always experience as 'being as' 'being such and such'.¹³

In Chapter Six I will examine in more detail Heidegger's notion of hermeneutical presuppositions or 'fore-structure'. Here I wish only to make the claim that for Marcuse the distinction between the ontic and the ontological, and the priority of the ontological, has considerable political importance. For if the ontic is ultimately to be grasped as the actualisation of diverse social activities and practices, i.e., as the actualisation of ethical life-forms, which Marcuse argues is the case, then Marcuse is in effect claiming that the

¹² B.Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, op.cit.p.64.

¹³ Heidegger quoted by S.Benhabib, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.xix.

possibilities that exist for specific ethical forms are directly correlated to the ontological. To put this another way, the entities that show up and constitute our worlds are themselves determined by our conception of the ontological - by what kind of fore-structure is directing our activities. The kinds of things that show up in our worlds, and distinguish them as worlds, are dependent upon specific ontological fore-structures, they are dependent our prescientific ways of experiencing and interpreting the world. Furthermore, the kind of fore-structure that enables the development of any one culture at any one time may well be radically different from another. It is apparent, even at this early stage, that for Marcuse any inquiry into what the ontological may entail cannot be couched in terms of the ontic. For Marcuse the ontological must be grasped in terms of a universal motility, and not in terms of the social facts of a particular ontic structure, or any other form of thinghood.

Pippin summarises both these aspects in the following way;

At this point, one can only say that Marcuse's use of the notion of ontology follows Heidegger's claim that a prior investigation of "the meaning of Being" is necessarily presupposed in any inquiry into specific human dealings with the world; that the problem of Being itself "is an issue" or "has meaning" only (or "primordially") with reference to this world (as an issue for *Dasein*) and that this "fundamental ontology" cannot be resolved by an appeal to "facts", "natures", "entities" or any other *Seinde*, since Being is that by virtue of which any such "ontic" dimension can be understood as what it is.¹⁴

2.2 Life

In *HO* Marcuse re-interprets Hegel's concept of *Life*. What then are we to make of this concept? The immediate answer is that Life is the medium in which historical forms come into being. In fact, Marcuse will go on to argue that Life is 'omni-present substance', and a subject characterised by the form of motility to which his inquiry is directed, i.e., Life itself is characterised by historicity. Indeed, for Marcuse, Life "produces for Hegel the actual basis of the dialectic."¹⁵ This is to say, Life, as the medium in which historical entities exist, is itself a dialectically transforming subject. To use Taylor's expression Life "is a picture that puts itself in motion".

Marcuse's comprehension of Life is not then some kind of process that encompasses and refers to the content of the natural sciences. That is, it is not some kind of biological, chemical

¹⁴ R.Pippin, 'Marcuse On Hegel And Historicity', op.cit., p.71.

¹⁵ H.Marcuse quoted by D.Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., p.73.

or any other physical process whereby categories remain fixed and empirically discoverable. Nor is Life simply some kind of spiritual life-force such as vitalism. Rather, Marcuse in agreement, and with reference to Dilthey, understands Life as an ontological concept. As Seyla Benhabib points out, for Marcuse "Life is that Being, the nature of which most authentically defines the historical-social world."¹⁶ In this interpretation of Dilthey's notion of Life, which Marcuse will argue owes its origins to Hegel, Life "...means neither a stage of nature nor the opposite of Spirit, logos, or reason, but the 'way in which certain facts exist and are given amidst the totality of the given world.'" ¹⁷ Marcuse will argue that the way in which not only facts exist but also the totality of the world exists (i.e., Life), is that of dialectical transformation. Indeed, Marcuse will eventually claim that the "... character of the 'world' is no longer constituted by the 'mechanical or chemical relation' but through its correlation to the living subject. The world is necessarily a 'living existent' the 'objectivity of what is alive'".¹⁸ Life, then, is the medium in which these effective relations manifest or objectify themselves.

Once again we can see in this statement Marcuse's insistence that "facts" in order to be facts must be contextualised. All objectifications (social institutions and practices, states and constitutions, juridical and economic systems etc.) emerge within the medium of Life. To use Benhabib's description, all these objectifications "...form clusters of meaning, the emergence, development, and passing away of which is history."¹⁹ As such facts are never given in an already complete form to an already complete subject. The ontic can only ever be understood as an articulation of the ontological. In order to comprehend the facts of the world, Marcuse claims we must also investigate the correlation between the subject and the "...network of effective relations [*ein Wirkungszusammenhang*] constituted by meaning contexts [*Bedeutung*]"²⁰

To claim that Life is a medium in this manner is perhaps even more controversial than it might first appear. For Marcuse will not only make the claim that the world and its entities are in a constant state of flux, i.e., the world is a "living existent". Nor will he simply make the additional claim and that this living existent is fundamentally ambiguous and can be interpreted in a variety of ways by other living subjects (i.e., particular socio-political cultures). Rather, he will claim that Hegel's concept of Life must be "...grasped as the 'all-present substance' and as the 'universal middle' (*Medium*) of beings, and regions of being

¹⁶ S.Benhabib, op.cit, p.xvi.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.xvi.

¹⁸ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, p.155.

¹⁹ S.Benhabib, ibid., p.xvii.

²⁰ Ibid., p.xvi.

...[are] ...disclosed and defined in their relation to it."²¹ This is to say that Marcuse will present Life as an ontological concept; as the ground for all entities, as a "universality that is omnipresent in all that is and which runs through all beings."²² In so doing, as has already been stated, Marcuse will present Life as a subject. Marcuse's challenge will be to present this concept of Life in a manner that does not itself collapse into a variant of the doctrine of realism, or that of subjective idealism.

I will return to the details of Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel's concept of Life in sections 5.4 and 6.2. At this stage it is important to begin to understand the relationship between Life and *historicity*.

2.3 Historicity

The concept and term *historicity* is ambiguous from a number of perspectives. With the recent rise in interest of Heidegger's philosophy, historicity is a concept often associated with *Being and Time*. But as Olafson points out it seldom seems to be used in the special ontological sense that Heidegger gave to the term.²³ It is, however, precisely the ontological sense that Marcuse has in mind when he invokes this concept. Nonetheless, part of the ambiguity associated with the concept historicity is that Heidegger was not the only one to use this term. Indeed, it appears Hegel was the first philosopher, if not to use historicity, then to put it at the centre of his thought.²⁴ And as is well known Heidegger picks up the term historicity from Dilthey. In one respect we should not be too concerned with the ambiguity that exists between Hegel, Dilthey and Heidegger, in relation to the notion of historicity, as it is one of the main problems that Marcuse sets out to investigate in *HO*. That is, Marcuse seeks to locate the origins of Dilthey's theory of historicity in Hegel's ontology. As such a resolution of the ambiguity of historicity, at this level, will occur in the unfolding of Marcuse's text.

Another point of ambiguity associated with the term historicity is its relationship with the concept of historicism. This is of concern here because it seems that all too often Marcuse is interpreted as talking about historicism when he invokes the term historicity. I presented several examples of this in the previous chapter. Certainly, these two concepts are associated, but they are also quite distinct. What then is the difference between these concepts? As Olafson points, historicity as used by Heidegger, and as the central theme of Marcuse's text, is

²¹ Ibid., p.5.

²² Ibid., p.155.

²³ F.A.Olafson, *The Dialectic of Action*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1979, p.273.f16.

used in a special ontological sense. For Heidegger it is claimed to be an essential characteristic of Dasein. Whilst Marcuse hangs on to Heidegger's presentation of historicity, he extends its applicability to characterise an essential aspect of Life. As Benhabib suggests historicity designates the mode or the manner in which the effective relations of Life become embodied. Advocates of historicism make no such claims in regard to the essential character of humanity or Life.

Indeed, historicism was introduced above as meaning that "all human activity and creations - law, language, religion, morality, art and philosophy - are the product of history, the creation of a specific society at specific time."²⁵ As a consequence of this it is often held that in order to grasp the constitution of specific societies, at a specific time, a special kind of empathy is required which recognises the contextual truth and meaning of societies. Chapter One noted not only the interpretative problems that this position raises in regards to how empathetic we can actually be to distant cultures, but also the relativist implications of historicism. Whilst Marcuse, following Hegel, certainly asserts something like this form of historicism, Marcuse also claims that it is the theory of historicity that ultimately enables both the interpretative and relativist problems of historicism to be overcome. For Marcuse, it is the theory of historicity that "produces for Hegel the actual basis of the dialectic", which in turn enables Hegel to present the concept of Life as an organic substance. And once the dialectical nature of Life, and the world, is grasped historical subjects are able to transform their relationship to the other from one of alienation to one of recognition. They are able to enact the principle of subjectivity.

But even if we can distinguish between historicity and historicism in the above manner, what exactly does the theory of historicity involve? Once again, in this chapter, we can only begin to introduce the concept of historicity. Pippin provides a good point to start this introduction. For Pippin the thesis of historicity asserts:

the past has a continuing effect on the present (is, as Heidegger claims, "stretched along into" the present) and that effect cannot be treated as a causal effect. That is, historicity cannot be understood as a "scientific" theory about the relation between events, and certainly not a causal theory, because the historicity thesis is that there

²⁴ T.Schwarz Wentzer, *Heidegger's early Hegelianism*, Unpublished paper, Aarhus University, Denmark, 1997, p.4 Like Marcuse, Schwarz Wentzer claims that Hegel presents the details of historicity through the dialectic.

²⁵ F.Beiser, 'Introduction' in G.W.F.Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Bison, Lincoln, 1995, p.xii.

are not "separate" events "in" history affecting each other. One of the events *is* what it is only in relation to its past.²⁶

Pippin sees an understanding of historicity at this level as rather benign, as often asserting little more than "human beings have histories, and that it might be important to understand past facts in trying to understand the present."²⁷

However, even at this level it is possible to begin to see the radical shift that an ethics that incorporates historicity may have upon the constitution of the self, and the constitution of ethical communities. To take the example of an individual person, the thesis of historicity would reject the liberal notion that the self can in some way be reduced to the embodiment of past experiences, and that the self is potentially, or ideally, entirely responsible for those experiences. Historicity would reject the naturalistic priority given to some kind of autonomous and rational self that fundamentally remains unaltered whilst accumulating a series of what can only be understood as *present-tense* life experiences. The theory of historicity rejects any suggestion that every experience can be fully accounted for in terms of the present - i.e., that time is to be understood as a continual sequence of present moments. This is so regardless of whether or not these experiences are valued and somehow enrich that person - make them into a more interesting person. The notion that the past continues to be stretched along into the present, that the past continues to effect the present, significantly alters how we might think of the unifying aspect of the *self* - what Kant referred to as the "transcendental unity of apperception."

Indeed, as will be argued below, historicity provides the most compelling means to underpin the self as a socially constituted being. Rather than the self remaining fundamentally unaltered (autonomously self-sufficient) the self has the possibility to be transformed through time, in the sense that the self has the possibility to mature through time, whilst accounting for an uninterrupted continuity of existence. As we shall see, Marcuse's presentation of this maturing is reminiscent of Heidegger's notion of human existence as the happening, or articulation of a life story, between birth and death.²⁸ But more than this it points to the possibility of the self both being understood as a temporal structure, and becoming a temporal structure. As Dreyfus succinctly puts it, "...the self defines itself by taking up its past by means of present actions that make sense in terms of its future."²⁹

²⁶ R. Pippin, 'Marcuse On Hegel And Historicity', op cit., p. 72.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 72.

²⁸ C. Guignon, 'Introduction' in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, CUP, Cambridge, 1998, p. 8.

²⁹ H. Dreyfus, 'Heidegger on the connection between nihilism, art, technology, and politics.', in Ibid., p. 289. In making this statement Dreyfus is indicating Heidegger's debt to Kierkegaard.

As such, the past matters not because it explains how we became what we are, or because it provides for some interesting tales, but because it continuously affects how and who we are. Our past affects how and who we are, because it remains present in the conceptual background or horizon through which the world appears to us. It remains present in the sense that it has been taken-up into our conceptual background and appears as an aspect of our future-directed actions. Our past remains present, and affects the way that we comport ourselves towards the world. The past, present and future function as seamless maturing and transforming aspects of the self. It is because our past is part of our present, and our future, in this way that it cannot be overcome easily. Indeed, this is the core of what separates a historicist understanding of the self from the liberal conception of an autonomous self, whose only difficulty in moving between diverse worlds would be accumulating the required technical knowledge. If, however, individuals *are* constituted through social practices and institutions, i.e., the world which they find themselves 'thrown' into, then they cannot simply pack their bags and move into another world. The prejudices of our past world, the world which constitutes who we are, what will be referred to later in this Thesis as the articulation of background (i.e., our fore-structures), has continual effect upon who we are, and what kind of entities can appear for us.

Later in this section I shall say something more of historicity in regards to temporality. However, one of the important things to note here is that historicity, particularly as understood by Heidegger, does not involve a claim about some future and ideal way in which time should be conceived by human subjects. Rather, it is to claim that in order for the world to happen for human subjects the past *must* be lifted up into the present, and directed towards the future, in this way. It is a claim that if human subjects are creatively involved in the world, then time does not simply involve the present, or a series of present nows, but rather it involves a form of action that embodies our past background experience in a manner that determines the possibilities that are open to us. Significantly, it is to claim that the way Western culture, particularly the physical sciences, conceive of time is a gross abstraction. For Heidegger, time does not occur as a series of present nows which we categorise and measure as future, present and past. Time has a much more unified and complex character. If Marcuse preserves this aspect of Heidegger's understanding of time, which I will argue he does, then part of Marcuse's political task of moving beyond relations of reification will involve moving beyond the abstracted conception of time. In effect this is to claim that in order to overcome our alienation from the world we need to re-establish historical subjects (including politics) as temporal structures.

None of this is to say that we are in some way destined to be imprisoned in our past, that we cannot alter ourselves or the world that we find ourselves thrown into. The historicity of the self does not involve a continual living in the past, or a continual anticipation of the future.

Indeed, such features would seem to be associated with the kind of self that is constituted as an autonomous "individual" accumulating present-tense experiences. The subject as a temporal structure lives in the present, but the present is itself constituted through the richness of the past and future-directedness. As I have just indicated, it is the very possibility of transformation of historical subjects, and the world, within this temporal structure, that Marcuse identifies as the heart of freedom. Later it will be argued that, for Marcuse, personal freedom is meaningless outside this temporal understanding of the self (and its cultural background). For it is only through such an understanding that Marcuse can present what Pippin refers to as "possible *subjects* of history".³⁰ This is to say that the most fundamental characteristic of human freedom, for Marcuse, is an awareness that people are responsible for history and all its manifestations; *things can change*.

However, whatever transformation of the self and the world takes place at an ontic level, it does so in a particular mode, and within specific limits. A specific person may experience new and diverse worlds, and be impressed by them in particular ways (often of great significance to that person), but they will continue to be more or less a foreigner in those worlds. As such, for Marcuse, any significant ontic transformation of the subject and the world is an external political process, not an internal religious one. If, as Marcuse asserts, transformation can take place only through some kind of hermeneutical correlation between the subject and the world, then the kind of activity required for such transformation is inherently social. If a transformation of the subject can only occur as a result of the world changing, which can only take place as a result of the subject changing, then clearly this is an effort that is beyond the psychological character of an individual person.

Pippin goes on to point out, however, that Marcuse's account of historicity is more than drawing attention to how we may understand ourselves as historical subjects, what kind of historical subjects exist, and what possibilities are open to historical subjects. Indeed, underlying Marcuse's claim, Pippin detects a much more radical assertion. This radicality has to do not only with our understanding of the ontic, but more importantly with historicity's ontological significance, i.e. what it says about the character of reality or Being. Pippin writes;

Marcuse professes to discover in the *Science of Logic* a commitment to a claim that Being (the meaning of Being in human existence) is *necessarily* historical, that any such determinate meaning is always only a moment in a continuous process of self-transformation, even self-negation.³¹

Indeed, Pippin quoting Marcuse's assessment of his discovery, states;

³⁰ R. Pippin, 'Marcuse On Hegel And Historicity', op cit., p.75.

From here on, Hegel has broken through to a totally new dimension: the universal historicity of beings. He has thereby laid the way to the first essential interpretation of historicity. The occurring (*Geschehen*) of finite beings is no development to a somehow predetermined or undetermined goal; in general no occurring from ...towards, but an occurrence purely in itself. It is immanent being. *Finite beings do not have histories, they are histories.*³²

From the above passage we can see once again the foundational role that Marcuse gives to the notion of motility. The riddle of history can not be solved by looking into the past for causal or scientific connections. Nor can it be solved by claiming that history is a procession to "a somehow predetermined or undetermined goal". Rather, for Marcuse, the meaning of the historical *is* the process; the meaning of the historical *is* motility. Marcuse will go on to argue that this process of becoming, the process that underpins historical reality, is re-enacted through a form of work (*Wirklichkeit*); of bringing something about. Furthermore he will claim that the embodiment of this process, in the work of a people (cultural formation), has a particular character, and that this character is historicity. This is to say the theory of historicity, at least, goes some distance to explaining the essential process that enables the creation of distinct societies. Historicity is a theory about the character of the ontological, which is reflected in the creation of the ontic. Historicism, on the other hand describes and makes certain claims about such distinct societies. As such historicism remains firmly at the level of the ontic.

It has already been indicated above that Marcuse's understanding of historicity draws upon Heidegger's notion of temporality. In order to further appreciate what Marcuse means by historicity (the essential character of Life) we need to return to the influence of Heidegger upon *HO*.

Frederick Olafson points out that whilst *Being and Time* is intended to address the question of Being, most of the book addresses what is seen to be a necessary preliminary question. This was the question of the entity that asks the question of being – Dasein.³³ In *HO*, Marcuse directly takes up the question of Being but in a way different from Heidegger. Marcuse chooses to conduct an analytic of Hegel's concept of Life. In proceeding in this way Marcuse wishes to retain many of Heidegger's brilliant insights whilst avoiding the problem of accounting for a universal concept through the existential multiplicity of Dasein. In effect Marcuse is trying to avoid the problems associated with making a universal claim about

³¹ Ibid., p.73.

³² H.Marcuse quoted by R.Pippin, Ibid., p.72. (Pippin's emphasis)

³³ F.Olafson, 'The Unity of Heidegger's Thought', in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, CUP, Cambridge, 1998, p.98.

human beings when human beings appear to be radically diverse, at least in terms of historical cultures. The contextual and particular character of human beings is course is the point of historicism, and it is what differentiates it from the universal claims contained in the theory of historicity.

By seeking to locate the origins of the theory of historicity in Hegel's ontology, Marcuse does not wish to abandon Heidegger's advanced understanding of the temporal character of Being, which in Heidegger's work historicity was developed to support. Rather, Marcuse's study involves a re-interpretation of what Marcuse will imply is Hegel's own temporal structure of Being. In re-examining Hegel's foundational ontological concept, what he variously calls the *universal*, the *category*, the *Concept* or the *Idea*, Marcuse will claim that not only were these notions preceded by the concept of Life. But also that the concept of Life is characterised by the kind of temporality that historicity invokes. Indeed, it has already been suggested that Marcuse thinks Hegel's ontology is only possible, and comprehensible, in relation to the theory of historicity. Therefore, in coming to an understanding of what Marcuse is getting at when he claims that the dialectic, as motility, is characterised by historicity, it is important to have some appreciation as to what is generally considered to be the revolutionary aspect of Heidegger's account of Being as a temporal structure. Earlier on in this section I alluded to how this temporal structure is understood in regards to the self. In order to further our understanding of Heidegger's notion of temporality I will quote at some length a passage from an essay by Olafson.

What is of fundamental importance is ... the notion that being cannot be identified with the "is" of the present tense, no matter how disguised, or with the mode of presence that corresponds to it. Instead, being is complexly articulated in the way that the system of tenses expresses, and there is no possibility of simplifying this complex ordering in favor of a single one of its modalities. The analysis of this articulation of being into its various modalities is ontology; and perhaps the most radical claim that Heidegger makes is that ontology has an essentially temporal character. This is because the distinctions it explicates among the modalities of being – between the "is" and the "is not" and between "is possible" and "not possibly" – have to be understood in temporal terms. The articulated structures of being are thus inextricably bound up with the distinctions of past, present, and future that are comprised in our own temporality as this was characterised in *Being and Time*. What "is", is thus necessarily what will have been; and what is, is also what has or has not been and what will or will not be. But these temporal qualifications of the articulations of being also articulate presence, which is, therefore, not just a matter of static immediacy of the present tense. To put this

point in a maximally paradoxical way, presence also comprises absence. It takes the form of the "has been" and the "will be" as well as the "is", and the being of the entities that form part of the world of Dasein is understood in just this ecstatic mode that characterises the temporality of Dasein.³⁴

In this passage Olafson is drawing our attention to the fact that Heidegger wishes to present a concept of time that is distinguished from previous concepts such as cosmic time, theological time, or subjective time. It is often pointed out that the complex ordering of time that Heidegger presents owes much to Husserl.³⁵ Indeed, Dostal argues that the complex ordering of time that Olafson refers to in the above passage needs to be understood in terms of Husserl's treatment of time-consciousness that takes place within a holistic structure, and which requires a combination of retention, attention, and protention. The paradigm Husserl uses to present his concept of time is an explanation of what is required to understand a whole piece of music. For Husserl notes that are no longer sounding have to be retained in the memory. At the same moment a "primal impression" of each note, as it sounds, must be gained. Finally, the auditor must "listen ahead" and construct expectations of what might or might not follow. Heidegger's notion of historicity can be understood as a development of Husserl's complex of retention, attention, and protention. Cultural backgrounds are always retained in any encounter Dasein has with the world, whenever Dasein attends to the world. The world can only be a world as long as it functions as a whole. Furthermore, the encounters that Dasein has in the world, whilst being practical moments of attending to things, in way that is directed by retaining certain forms of knowledge, are also encounters that demand a future-directedness or protention.

In the following chapters I will address Marcuse's interpretation of the notion of Life as an ontological concept characterised by historicity – as a temporal structure of being. Here I wish only to connect Marcuse's position with something like Olafson's description that "...being is complexly articulated in the way that the system of tenses expresses, and there is no possibility of simplifying this complex ordering in favour of a single one of its modalities." As will become apparent below, especially in Chapter Seven, Marcuse seeks to identify the various stages of Hegel's notion of spirit with the modalities of being. What needs to be established at this point is that Marcuse seeks to do this within a framework which emphasises the temporal character of spirit, i.e. its ability to be 'stretched along into' the present. Marcuse's intention is then to reveal Hegel's modes of spirit as being characterised

³⁴ Ibid., p.103.

³⁵ R.J.Dostal, 'Time and phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger', in C.Guignon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, op.cit., pp.141-170.

by historicity - as being "...inextricably bound up with the distinctions of past, present, and future ..."

The individual "moments" of Spirit, which appear in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as "consciousness," "self-consciousness," "reason," and "Spirit," do not stand in a temporal relation to each other. That is to say, Life or Spirit is not first consciousness, then self-consciousness, then reason, then Spirit, etc; rather Life or Spirit *exist* only as the unity and totality of all these moments. Only on the basis of the whole underlying them all can these emerge as individual shapes. They are modes of being of the one universal Spirit and unfold themselves *contemporaneously* within the totalising structure of Spirit.³⁶

In emphasising the contemporaneous appearance of spirit Marcuse intends to stress that all modes of being are articulations involving more than the present. Certainly these modes occur in time, but time itself is to be understood as a manifestation that "also comprises absence".

Time is what sustains itself as the same while flowing through all differences. Time exists only as past, present, and future, but is not consumed by any one of these distinctions. On the contrary, it absorbs them and sublates them in all its unity, sustains itself as the universal in them, and thus comes to pass.³⁷

For Marcuse the temporal character of Life as an ontological concept is manifested in Hegel's philosophy through Life's dialectical motility. Specifically, the past is taken up into the present and directed towards the future in Hegel's concept of sublation or *Aufheben*. How this takes place within Hegel's central philosophical works will be the subject matter of the following chapters. With the above preliminary account of Marcuse's central concepts of ontology, Life and historicity in place I will now address the question of why Marcuse abandoned Heidegger's existential analytic into Dasein in favour of an analytic into Life? This will serve to further distinguish Marcuse's work from Heidegger's. Of specific interest is Marcuse's attempt to move beyond both the abstractions of Heidegger, and his perceived bourgeois individualism.

³⁶ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.301.

³⁷ Ibid., p.302.

2.4 Why does Marcuse adopt an analytic into Life?

Given that *HO* was written by Marcuse's as his *Habilitationsschrift*, and was to be read by Heidegger, the above question is of both academic and philosophic interest. From an academic perspective it seems unlikely that any student would submit a piece of work that directly challenges their teaching master's core Thesis. Especially, as at the time of writing (1930-31) Marcuse still held Heidegger in high personal and philosophic esteem. One possible explanation, and this is quite tentative, is that Marcuse was actually following lines that had been drawn by Heidegger himself, lines that would eventually lead Heidegger to make his so-called turn. These lines have to do with Heidegger's own dissatisfaction with approaching the question of Being through the subjective path of Dasein. Certainly, in later years Marcuse came to think of the categories of Dasein as not only excessively subjective – i.e., relativist – but also authoritarian.³⁸ I would like to suggest that the dissatisfaction, which both Heidegger and Marcuse came to feel towards the analytic of Dasein, has its roots in the fact that Dasein does not adequately address the intersubjective aspect of Being. Furthermore, Dasein itself is at one level too abstract a category, and at another level too individualistic to account for the ethical values most favourably associated with it – freedom, resoluteness, care, authenticity etc. It is precisely, this intersubjective aspect of Being that Marcuse finds so compelling about Hegel's concept of Life, and the becoming of spirit as a particular life-form. In order to add some weight to the above claim, I will now examine an essay by Frederick Olafson, which draws out the importance of intersubjectivity as a philosophic issue.³⁹

Olafson suggests that as early as 1929 Heidegger began grappling with the possible collapse of his notion of Dasein into what can be referred to as subjective idealism. Indeed, Olafson argues that in his lecture series *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude and Solitariness* (1929-30) Heidegger directly approaches this question.⁴⁰ It is perhaps of no coincidence that this is the period of closest association between Heidegger and Marcuse. As one of about a dozen advanced students of Heidegger, it would seem inconceivable that Marcuse was not aware of these lectures, or that he did not take part in discussions

³⁸ See F.Olafson, 'Heidegger's Politics: An Interview with Herbert Marcuse', in R.Pippin, A.Feenberg, C.P.Weber, (eds.) *Marcuse: Critical Theory and the Promise of Utopia*, MacMillan Press, London, 1988, p.95-107.

³⁹ F.Olafson, 'The unity of Heidegger's thought', in Guignon.C, *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p.97-121. Olafson takes up the issue of intersubjectivity as a ground for ethics in detail in, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A study of Mitsein*, op.cit.

⁴⁰ F.Olafson, 'The unity of Heidegger's thought', op.cit., p.105. Interestingly enough, immediately following these lectures Heidegger delivered a series of lectures on Hegel's *Phenomenology*, which Marcuse refers to on p.201 of *Hegel's Ontology*.

surrounding them.⁴¹ This is especially so when we consider Marcuse's own description of his intentions at this time: "to go back to Freiburg ...in order to work with Heidegger. I stayed in Freiburg and worked with Heidegger until December 1932 ..."⁴²

In unravelling the relationship that holds between Dasein, the world, and Being, Olafson argues that Heidegger explicitly rejected any form of crude historicism that attempted to account for the unity of Being solely in terms of historical societies (i.e., in terms of subjective idealism). The ontological cannot be accounted for in terms of the ontic, and any attempt to do so inevitably results in historical relativism.

...it is clear that Heidegger holds ...that the world is made up of states of affairs, usually of a highly pragmatic character, and the very possibility of *presence* is bound up with something's *being* something or other. He also denies with great vigor any suggestion that this "is"-character is in any way a projection, linguistic or otherwise, of a subject that would thus have to be understood as having a prior familiarity with mere things...⁴³

Olafson thinks it is precisely the question of the independence of Being from Dasein that Heidegger addresses in his lectures *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*.⁴⁴ Furthermore, Olafson suggests it is through raising this question, that the Heidegger of this period, came to certain conclusions regarding the character of Being, which were both at odds with his analytic of Dasein, and which indicated its failings. Specifically, Heidegger's analytic of Dasein was intended to move beyond the problematics of traditional philosophy that continually juxtaposed either the priority of the ideal or the priority of the material. It supposedly accomplished this through the notion of being-in-the-world. But if this notion itself tended to collapse into a form of subjective idealism, underpinned by individualism, then Heidegger's philosophy had significantly failed to achieve its role.

As was argued in the previous chapter Marcuse certainly thought during this period that Heidegger's philosophy had major failings in regards to the emphasis it placed upon the individual. In describing the philosophical and political concerns of Marcuse during this period Katz states:

Marcuse claimed that in its individual bias, Heidegger's philosophy had in effect misunderstood itself: where the individual is constrained by a network of reified

⁴¹ B.Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, op.cit.p.65.

⁴² H.Marcuse quoted by S.Benhabib, op.cit., p.ix.

⁴³ F.Olafson, 'The unity of Heidegger's thought', op.cit., p.104.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.105f.

social relationships, a true philosophy of individualism will address a socio-economic totality and will bring the individual in only at the end. He alludes to the continuity of Heidegger's work with the false individualism characteristic of the tradition of bourgeois thought, which focuses prematurely on the atomised individual of capitalist society: 'Thus it is precisely when philosophy wishes to take seriously its concern with the individual that it has no right to neglect the world in which the existence of the individual is fulfilled'.⁴⁵

Part of Marcuse's objection is the difficulty of accessing the ontological through the abstract category of Dasein. I will return to this point shortly. The point being made here is that Heidegger himself was becoming aware of the shortcomings of his analytic and moved towards re-establishing the distinct character of all the elements involved in being-in-the-world. For Olafson, this took the form of Heidegger re-distinguishing between Being, entities and Dasein, a distinction Heidegger referred to as the primal happening.

If this distinction did not happen, then we could not even, in obliviousness to the distinction, devote ourselves, initially and for the most part, to entities alone. For precisely in order to experience *what* and *how* an entity in each case *is* in itself an entity that it is, we have to understand already, even though not conceptually, matters like the Whatness and the Thatness of entities. This distinction not only happens continuously; but it must [also] have happened if we desire to experience entities in their being-such-and-such. We do not learn – and certainly not subsequently – anything about being from entities; instead entities, wherever and however we come at them, stand *already in the light of being*. Taken metaphysically, the distinction thus stands at the beginning of Dasein itself...Man thus always stands in the possibility of asking: What is that? and Is it really or is it not?⁴⁶

In this passage Heidegger clearly lays out his central claim that Being is not to be understood as an entity or as a property of an entity (a property of Dasein). Consequently, to use Olafson's words "being is in no sense the creature or the handiwork of Dasein, or man..." Being can not be reduced to subjective idealism. However, whilst Olafson quotes this passage as an example of what he claims to be the balanced perspective that Heidegger adopts in these lectures, to the relationship that exists between Being, Dasein and the world, Olafson also thinks that there are some fundamental problems. Most notably, despite Heidegger's insistence that Being is not dependent upon Dasein, his analytic of Dasein served to cover-up,

⁴⁵ B.Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, op.cit.p.72.

⁴⁶ M.Heidegger quoted by F.Olafson, 'The unity of Heidegger's thought', op.cit., p.106.

rather than reveal, this difference - i.e., it left itself open to being interpreted as a form of subjectivism.

The source of these difficulties lies in the fact that in the period of *Being and Time* the rapprochement of being as such with existence, and thus with Dasein as the entity whose mode of being is existence, had become so close as to be virtually complete. The extent of that rapprochement is indicated not only by the fact that both being and truth are declared to *exist* and are thereby assimilated into the mode of being of Dasein, but also by the fact they are both characterized as finite and so akin to Dasein in this fundamental respect as well.⁴⁷

Heidegger's attempts to re-emphasise the independence and priority of Being, (i.e., the ontological) would obviously have been picked up, and even expanded by Marcuse. Specifically, I am suggesting Marcuse's insistence upon the 'Absolute Difference within Being'. I will address this concept in more detail in Chapter Three and again in Chapter Five in regards to the importance it plays in Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel's ontology. However, from what has already been said of this concept (in the previous chapter) we are aware that Marcuse thinks that the absolute difference within Being enables Hegel's ontology to overcome charges that it collapses into some form of identity theory - i.e, the progressive development of the subject to an identification with Being. As such the absolute difference within Being attempts to move beyond any account of reality that is couched ultimately in terms of the subject (subjective idealism) or the object (univocal realism). Indeed, Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel's ontology as an account of historicity characterised as a radical motility rests firmly upon his claim concerning the absolute difference within Being.

Whether or not Heidegger is ultimately unable to reconcile the unity and singularity of Being with the plurality of Dasein (the many different forms of human being), as Olafson thinks, or whether Heidegger's attempt to address the question of Being through an analytic of Dasein collapses into subjective idealism, is not what directly concerns this Thesis. What is of concern, is that there seems to be strong evidence that at the time when Marcuse was working on *HO*, Heidegger was already raising doubts about his own analytic of Dasein. If indeed, Marcuse was aware of these doubts, as I have suggested, then there seems to be good reason for associating Marcuse's work with Heidegger's own reassessment of the question concerning Being. But more than this, Marcuse's work may be associated (even blessed) with a line of thought that Olafson suggests Heidegger took up in his lectures of this period, but later aborted. Regardless of whether indeed this was the case there does seem to be a strong

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.107.

similarity between Marcuse's articulation of the absolute difference within Being, and Heidegger's notion of primal happening.⁴⁸

This line of thought, as it was taken up by Marcuse, is of interest to us here for two reasons. The first reason, as Olafson directs us, is the issue of intersubjectivity. For Olafson, many of the problems contained in analytic of Dasein could have been worked out with a more thorough theory of the role intersubjectivity or *Mitsein*. Furthermore, they could have been worked out in a manner which preserved the insights into the role of human agency in the question of Being. In chapter seven I shall present Marcuse's encounter with Hegel's *Phenomenology* precisely along these intersubjective lines. I shall also argue that it is precisely along these lines that Marcuse seeks to break the relativist dilemma of historical contextualism. Significantly, however, it is through Marcuse's analytic of Hegel's concept of Life that Marcuse establishes that any encounter with Being is fundamentally intersubjective. For Olafson, whilst Heidegger's later work also moved away from his analytic of Dasein in an attempt to overcome some of the above problems, it also sacrificed some of the most promising aspects of his philosophy. Indeed, Olafson concludes his essay with the following words:

In my view, one of the main sources of the difficulties [Heidegger] encounters is his failure to follow up some of the clues that suggest a much stronger role for intersubjectivity – for *Mitsein* – in the way interdependence of existence and presence is to be conceived.⁴⁹

The second reason this line of thought is of interest has to do with the contingency of Dasein. I suspect this may in fact be a restatement of Olafson's point concerning the tension between the unity and singularity of Being with the plurality of Dasein. Nonetheless, once we fully appreciate that Being "is in no sense the creature or the handiwork of Dasein, or man" the question of Dasein itself takes on a different flavour. Whilst I am arguing that Marcuse maintains that Being cannot be reduced to Dasein, he also maintains that something like Dasein is a necessary element for any socially meaningful existent to come into being. What I mean by this may become more apparent if we recollect that Heidegger's notion of Dasein is

⁴⁸ It is of interest, particularly in relation to the tension Benhabib sees in Marcuse's work (see section 1.6) that at this time Heidegger initiated a change in his view of temporality. Dostal suggests that this involved a "...shift from the analysis of the temporality of Dasein to the temporality of being ... marked terminologically by the shift from the standard German *Zeitlichkeit* (Temporality) to the Latinate *Temporalität* (temporality). The temporality of Dasein is *Zeitlichkeit*; the temporality of Being is *Temporalität*. A question the text does not answer concerns what the consequences of this shift might be." See R.Dostal, op.cit. p.157. What I am suggesting is Hegel's *Ontology* can be read in part as addressing precisely the consequences of this shift.

⁴⁹ F.Olafson, 'The unity of Heidegger's thought', op.cit., p.121.

not to be identified with some kind of inalienable, or naturalistic, or genetically determined, or even unique characteristic of humanity. Human beings, as biological entities, are not to be identified with Dasein. Rather, Dasein was Heidegger's generic term for a particular kind of entity. "Dasein is an entity which does not just occur amongst other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it."⁵⁰

How exactly Heidegger's notion of Dasein is generally understood in philosophic discourse is rather problematic and not a discussion I wish to enter.⁵¹ However, it is clear that by the 1930's it had already become increasingly difficult to identify Dasein with what was occurring in the socio-political world. Heidegger's exciting and empowering presentation of Dasein simply did not accord with the characteristics of actual human beings. It was for Marcuse an abstraction that served to reinforce regressive forms of alienation rather than promote authentic social relations. Once again Katz succinctly sums up Marcuse's position.

The second of Marcuse's major objections to Heidegger's system, namely its abstractness from concrete conditions: human Being (*Dasein*) remains remote from human beings (*Daseiende*), historicity nowhere intersects with history. Once again, Heidegger's philosophical breakthrough - in this case the interpretation of being through the existential given of time - is not challenged, but only his failure to press his discovery to its *immanent* and radical conclusions. In identifying the essential historicity of human existence, Heidegger had retreated from *history*, and from the material conditions within which an authentic existence might be achieved: 'phenomenology cannot restrict itself to the demonstration of the historicity of its object, and subsequently fall back into abstractions ... The analysis of an historical object must be grounded in historicity, must always take into consideration the concrete historical situation and its concrete "material condition" Making a charge that would recur throughout his later work, Marcuse insisted that the value of abstraction is to provide not a point of departure, but a point of return.⁵²

For Marcuse one of the dangers of the abstraction of Dasein from history was that it re-naturalised Dasein in a way that detracted from its contingency. This is to say, that in the same way that asserting that freedom is an inalienable right serves to hide the political fact that most

⁵⁰ M. Heidegger quoted by S. Benhabib, op.cit., p.xx.

⁵¹ Writers such as Dostal claim Dasein "is not an attempt to give a full account of what it is to be human", but rather "to provide the appropriate basis or background for such an account." However, this seems to ultimately concede the abstractness of Heidegger's position. In any case Marcuse certainly, intended, as we saw in section 1.5, to historicise the notion Dasein and thus directly connect to what it is to be an authentic human being. See R. Dostal, op.cit., p.154.

people live in servitude, the abstraction of Dasein hides the fact that increasingly it does not exist. For Marcuse the notion of Dasein is "not a point of departure, but a point of return." For Marcuse, the continuation of a form of being that we could describe as Dasein required care. Dasein was not a description of an eternal form of human being, but rather a description of a particular ethical life-form. Indeed, at this very time Marcuse raised the question;

Whether it is not the case, that particular and contingent situations can destroy the authenticity of human existence, can abolish it into sheer illusion... [any talk about historicity] must remain abstract and uncommitted until the analysis focuses on the concrete, 'material' situation.⁵³

It seems at some level Heidegger accepted that Dasein was a contingent ethical form in danger of perishing. It was the perceived contingency and consequent annihilation of Dasein that lead to Heidegger's disastrous alignment with the Nazis. The contingency of Dasein for both Marcuse and Heidegger is succinctly expressed in an exchange between the two in 1948. Heidegger stated:

I expected from National Socialism a spiritual renewal of life in its entirety, a reconciliation of social antagonisms and a deliverance of western Dasein from the dangers of communism.⁵⁴

In part, Marcuse's response was:

You, the philosopher, have confused the liquidation of occidental Dasein with its renewal? Was this liquidation not already evident in every word of the "leaders," in every gesture and deed of the SA, long before 1933.⁵⁵

As is also evident in this exchange, it was the very contingency and disappearance of Dasein that had motivated Heidegger's original investigation into Being. Philosophically, it seems that Heidegger's political indiscretion may also point to the difficulty of attempting to enter the question of Being through the generic concept of human subjectivity. For where are we to find this entity of Dasein? Clearly the being for which Being is an issue was never to be found

⁵² B.Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, op.cit.p.73 Katz prefers the term historicity to historicity. For ease of reading I have historicity with historicity where ever it occurs.

⁵³ H.Marcuse quoted by J. Habermas, 'Psychic Thermidor and the Rebirth of Rebellious Subjectivity', in R.Pippin, A.Feenberg, C.Weber (eds.), *Marcuse: Critical Theory And The Promise Of Utopia*, MacMillan, New York, 1988, p.7.

⁵⁴ M.Heidegger quoted by D.Kellner in, 'Heidegger to Marcuse, January 20, 1948', in D.Kellner (ed.), *Herbert Marcuse: Technology, War and Fascism. Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse*, Routledge, New York, 1998, p.265.

in the emerging suburban wastelands, or in the corporate boardrooms of increasingly powerful corporations, or in the hierarchy of the political machines of the twentieth century. Increasingly it became evident that Dasein was an entity of another world. Dasein increasingly became seen not as the universal and fundamental character of human being, but as a particular form of human being, as a particular ethical comportment towards the world. But if this entity no longer exists, if humanity is no longer characterised by Dasein, or worse still, never was characterised by Dasein, it would seem any analytic into Dasein as an entry point into the question of Being has a problem? How then do we enter or approach the question of Being in order to grasp what authenticity may involve?

It is my contention that in confronting these issues, and historicising aspects of Heidegger's philosophy, Marcuse understood Dasein not as the beginning of an ethical inquiry into the meaningfulness of existence, but rather as its conclusion. In effect, this is to make the claim that Marcuse came to understand Dasein as a particular kind of human being or life-form. Specifically, Marcuse came to understand Dasein as a particular human life-form characterised by freedom, which Marcuse, in turn, identified with Hegel's notion of *Wirklichkeit*. Marcuse, as such, understood Dasein as authentic being or free being; a form of being culminating in Hegel's notion of spirit. However, to claim that something like Dasein characterises a particular ethical comportment that embodies authenticity and freedom is not to deny its universal aspect. For Marcuse is also saying that if we have arrived at this point of history we have done so because of the creative efforts of this form of being. What needs to be done then is to become self-conscious of what these efforts involve, and to direct our lives by them. It may well have been in coming to an understanding of what is ontologically presupposed by this kind of ethical being that Marcuse chose to re-examine Hegel's concept of Life, a concept which he implicitly claims was always present in Heidegger's philosophy through Dilthey's influence. It may well have been in response to the troubling questions of the intersubjectivity, and the contingency of Dasein (understood as authenticity or freedom) that Marcuse abandoned Heidegger's existential analytic into Dasein in favour of an analytic into Life.

2.5 Hegelian Metaphysics without Absolute Knowledge?

The final aspect of Marcuse's text that I would like to address in this chapter concerns the nature of Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel, which is fundamentally the rejection of Hegel's concept of Absolute Knowledge as an ontological concept. Just as the previous section was intended to help distinguish Marcuse's work from Heidegger's, this section will begin the process of distinguishing Marcuse's reading of Hegel.

⁵⁵ H. Marcuse quoted by D. Kellner, *Ibid.*, p. 266f.

In *HO* Marcuse presents, an interpretation of Hegel in which Absolute Knowledge is stripped of its priority as an ethical substance. Indeed, Marcuse claims to have identified a fundamental tension within Hegel's ontology that Hegel himself repressed. As Seyla Benhabib points out this "...tension is reflected between a definition of Being oriented to ideas of cognition and Absolute Knowledge on one hand, and a definition of Being oriented toward the meaning of Life on the other"⁵⁶. Marcuse argues that this orientation towards Life was further developed, but not acknowledged, in the work of Wilhelm Dilthey. In effect Marcuse is presenting his interpretation of Hegel's concept of *Life* as the grounding for a universal ethical criterion. Marcuse summarises the relevance of his project in the following words.

Hegelian ontology is the ground and the basis of the theory of historicity developed by Dilthey and thereby the basis of the current tradition of philosophical questioning about historicity. To regain access to the fundamental character of historical being ... we must first expose and clear this ground, and this entails a critical evaluation of Hegelian ontology. The ontological concept of Life, the concepts of happening and Spirit, serve as bridges leading back from Dilthey. The interpretation of the ontological meaning of human life as historicity and its determination as Spirit are intimately related to a basic philosophical framework. This philosophy gains the meaning of Being by its orientation to the idea of Life and defines the process of development of beings as a form of "living" motility. *Human life, moreover, is viewed only as a privileged form of this process of development.*⁵⁷

What Marcuse believes to be the objective or universal aspect of Hegel's concept of Life is clearly indicated in the final sentence of the above passage (to which I have added emphasis). This is to say that the concept of Life, which Marcuse will eventually ground his presentation of authenticity, does not arise from human being or spirit. Rather, human being or spirit arises from Life. As such Marcuse insists upon the fact that Life as the ground of ethical being is, to use Olafson's words, "in no sense the creature or handiwork of man." In regards then to the character of Marcuse's project, it will be useful to make some general comments concerning apparent problems that some commentators have raised surrounding this kind of interpretation of Hegel.

One of the most fundamental functions of Hegel's Absolute is that it allows him to present an historicised account of multiple worlds, and of diverse forms of ethical life, without collapsing

⁵⁶ S. Benhabib, 'Translators Introduction', in H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1987, p. xxi.

⁵⁷ H. Marcuse, *ibid.*, p. 2f.

into the problems of historical relativism outlined above. For the mature Hegel, and many of his interpreters, the Absolute ultimately functions as a criterion for overcoming deadlocks between immediately incompatible forms of ethical life. The Absolute is the *universal* that enables otherwise incompatible life-forms to develop in a progressive and meaningful way, by ultimately determining the structure of the world towards which they are necessarily directed. The significance of this is that whatever contextual *truth* inheres in the diverse historical stages, or individual ethical life-forms, it is a truth that is ultimately dependent upon the final coming-into-being of Absolute Knowledge. Hegel as such presents us with a twofold understanding of truth. At one level truth is understood to be contextual -Hegel recognises that there is a truth that functions *within* specific worlds - in the same manner as Lyotard would claim for specific language games. However, at another level truth is understood to be universal, i.e., there is a progressive truth that functions *between* specific worlds. Hegel's universal understanding of truth, as a movement towards the Absolute Knowledge, is widely considered to be the form of truth that ultimately prevents his position from collapsing into relativism.⁵⁸ Consequently, it is assumed that if the notion of Absolute Knowledge is abandoned, then we are left with an infinite plurality of narratives, and that Hegel's account of ethical life itself collapses into the very relativism that it seeks to oppose. David Couzens Hoy presents a good example of this kind of view:

Removing the absolute from the conclusion to Hegel's phenomenological narrative would quickly generate a pluralism that would be difficult to limit. The result would come close to the French poststructuralist claim that any text is involved with other texts in an infinite network of readings.⁵⁹

Indeed, this view, and the choice it apparently demands between key aspects of Hegel's thought, is further expressed by Hilary Putnam;

Hegel contributed two great and formative ideas to our culture, ideas between which there is some tension. On the one hand, he taught us to see all our ideas, including above all our ideas of rationality, as historically conditioned... On the other hand, Hegel postulated an *objective* notion of rationality which we (or Absolute Mind) were coming to possess with the fulfilment of the progressive social and intellectual reforms which were already taking place... Thinkers who accept the first Hegelian idea, that our conceptions of rationality are historically conditioned, while

⁵⁸ F.Beiser also draws attention to Hegel's two distinct understandings of truth -contextual and universal - as a distinction between the horizontal and the vertical in his essay on Hegel's historicism. See F.Beiser, "Hegel's Historicism" in F.Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p.279f.

rejecting the idea of an end (or even an ideal limit) to the process, tend to become historical or cultural relativists.⁶⁰

In effect this is to claim that once Hegel has been stripped of his "metaphysics", or as Marcuse would phrase it ontology, then there is nothing that separates Hegel from any number of more historically oriented thinkers in the character of Nietzsche through to the poststructuralists.⁶¹ Hegel's relevance as such is reduced to an interesting chapter in the history of ideas but of little concern to the "cutting edge" of contemporary political theory, and those who unashamedly assert historical difference.

However, there is a distinction to be made between abandoning Hegel's notion of Absolute Knowledge and abandoning all interpretations of his metaphysics.⁶² And to be persuaded by any position similar to Couzens Hoy's one must ignore this distinction and treat Hegel's presentation of the Absolute as identical with the only legitimate reading of his metaphysics. Such a position would claim that the universality that prevents Hegel's metaphysics from collapsing into a "pluralism that would be difficult to limit" are the ideas of complete cognition or Absolute Knowledge, i.e. the necessity of the unfolding of the Absolute Idea as the determining conceptual structure of reality. Such critics are claiming that Hegel has only one choice. He can either keep his historical and contextual understanding of truth (become one of us) or he can have a traditional univocal understanding of truth (become one of them) but he can't have it both ways. Or can he?

Although Marcuse accepts that the predominant understanding of the most determining form of universality in Hegel's work is that associated with the movement towards Absolute Knowledge, Marcuse rejects that this is the only compelling reading (despite the mature Hegel's insistence to the contrary). Indeed, Marcuse states in his introduction:

In order to clarify the connections suggested, a new interpretation of Hegel's *Logic* must be attempted, for traditional interpretations, already widespread in the older

⁵⁹ D.Couzens Hoy and T.McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1994, p.123.

⁶⁰ H.Putnam quoted by R.Stern, 'MacIntyre and Historicism', in J.Horton and S.Mendus (eds.) *After MacIntyre: Critical Perspectives on the Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1994, p.146.

⁶¹ For a summary of the problems of stripping Hegel of his metaphysics whilst trying to preserve his contemporary relevance see T.Wartenberg, 'Hegel's idealism: the logic of conceptuality', in F.Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p.102-129.

⁶² Marcuse of course was not the first to draw attention the fact that Hegel experimented with a number of different metaphysical systems before arriving at his mature system. It is common place amongst Hegelian scholars to point out that in Hegel's early writings the diremption of the self from the world (alienation) was overcome or unified by the notions of Love and/or Life rather than the Absolute. For an account of the development of Hegel's distinct metaphysical systems see, R.Kroner, 'Introduction', in, G.W.F. Hegel

Hegelian school, have sought the basic principles of historicity first and foremost in Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. These, however, present a forced and frozen modification of the discoveries made in the *Logic* and the *Phenomenology*. In our opinion this school of interpretation has also avoided developing Hegelian logic by placing the newly acquired concept of Being at its center and by taking account of the rootedness of this logic in a fundamental groundwork orientated to the ontological concept of Life and its historicity. In this respect their evasion followed a tendency later dominant in Hegel himself of modifying his original position.⁶³

I will argue that in seeking to re-interpret the importance of the universality of Life Marcuse opens up the way for a Heideggerian ethical comportment to the world, which enables the creation lives characterised by *authenticity* and *freedom*. How this way of life unfolds will be a continuing theme throughout this Thesis. Importantly, for Marcuse it is the universality of Life that opens up the very possibility of a form of ethical being which enables diversity without collapsing into relativism. That is, Marcuse interprets the universality of Life, as articulated in Hegel's early writings, as an alternative basis for a "self-grounded ethical criterion" to Hegel's problematic notion of Absolute Knowledge.⁶⁴ In arguing in this way Marcuse is engaged in what may be understood as a form of fundamental ontology. But is it a form which claims to overcome the authoritarian aspects of the Absolute as a cognitive substance.

However, Marcuse is not completely abandoning the notion of the absolute. Rather, Marcuse is explicitly drawing our attention to the distinction between the presentation of the Absolute as a cognitive substance in Hegel's later writings, and Hegel's earlier alternative metaphysical systems. Marcuse's distinction between the earlier and later forms of Hegel's Absolute not only characterises, but also marks the importance of Marcuse's investigation. For Marcuse the distinct forms of the Absolute were manifested in Hegel's earlier presentation of Being oriented towards the meaning of Life, and his later presentation of Being oriented to ideas of cognition and Absolute Knowledge. Marcuse is offering both an alternative reading of

(Trans. T.M.Knox), *Early Theological Writings*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1992, p.1-67.

⁶³ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.3. The above passage is somewhat ambiguous. It is of course Marcuse who wishes to place the 'newly acquired concept of Being' at the centre of Hegel's work.

⁶⁴ F.Beiser also makes the point that it is in Hegel's early writings that he is most critical of the a-historical perspectives of traditional philosophy. In making this point Beiser emphasises that Hegel's theory of historicity is not laid down in a systematic way but must be interpreted through, especially, the *Early Theological Writings* and the *Phenomenology*. This is the same point as Marcuse makes in his attempt to connect Hegel's historicity to the explicit theories of Dilthey. Beiser, however, gives no indication of finding the same kind of tension between Hegel's earlier and later writings. See F.Beiser,

Hegel's metaphysics as fundamental ontology, *and* asserting the foundational aspect of ontology in socio-political life. Furthermore, he claims to be doing so in a manner in which does not force us to choose between historicism and historicity, diversity and universality, relativism and truth. Marcuse is keeping the door open for a universal ethical criterion.

Part Two

Chapter Three: Alienation Gives Rise to the Need for Philosophy: The Ontological Problem of Unity¹

Chapter Two presented an outline of the subject matter of *HO*. In particular attention was directed towards Marcuse's stated purpose of inquiry; "...to disclose and ascertain the fundamental characteristics of historicity." It was stressed that Marcuse understood 'historicity' to signify "...the meaning of this 'is,' namely the meaning of the Being of the historical." This was further interpreted to mean that Marcuse was interested in investigating the "ground" of historical entities. Specifically, I indicated that Marcuse's inquiry would lead him to present the ground of historical entities as Hegel's ontological concept of Life. For Marcuse, Hegel's concept of Life functions as a universal medium within which historical entities appear. Importantly, Marcuse will go on to associate the essential character of both historical entities, and Life, as being characterised by historicity. To this extent I also sought to associate Marcuse's presentation of historicity with Heidegger's emphasis on the temporality of Being.

In presenting the above outline it was suggested that *HO* could be read as a continuation of Marcuse's early philosophical project, i.e., as a continuation of his proposal for the establishment of a concrete philosophy. It was suggested that this text can be seen as the culmination of Marcuse's efforts to directly engage in this project. Marcuse saw the task of concrete philosophy to investigate the underlying structures of human existence (the ontological) in order to put the dialectical investigations of historical materialism (the ontic) on a solid foundation. However, in *HO* there is a shift of emphasis. The dialectical is no longer identified primarily with a method of investigating, or characterising, material historical conditions. Rather, the dialectic is extended and identified with the deeper ontological structures that enable material historical forms to come into existence. Reality itself is conceived to be essentially dialectical, but in a way that is independent from the creative dialectical activities of humanity. *HO* is concerned with establishing that this form of creativity, and the dialectical character of reality, which Marcuse accesses through an analytic of Life, are both grounded in the concept of historicity. The theory of historicity "produces for Hegel the actual basis of the dialectic."

¹ It should be noted that throughout this thesis, for stylistic reasons, when I refer to 'Hegel' I am, unless otherwise indicated, referring to Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel.

Whilst it is clear that the above account suggests a return from Marxist dialectics to Hegelian dialectics Marcuse has no intention of abandoning either Marx or political praxis. Certainly, Marcuse's investigation needs to be read in the light of Heidegger's understanding of temporality, but Marcuse insists that philosophy's role in the world is more than to passively interpret the world. For Marcuse, the point of philosophy remains to change the world. Significantly, for Marcuse philosophy, as the process of uncovering the fundamental structures of existence, is intimately associated with ethics.

Marcuse begins his inquiry into the fundamental character of the historical with an interpretation of Hegel's *Logic*. Marcuse claims to have found within this text an ambivalence within Hegel's ontological framework. Benhabib describes this ambivalence, as we have already seen, as a tension "...between a definition of Being oriented to ideas of cognition and Absolute Knowledge on one hand, and a definition of Being oriented towards the meaning of Life on the other".² In *HO* Marcuse proposes firstly to reveal this tension (within the *Logic*), and secondly to re-examine Hegel's earlier writings (*ETW*, *PhG*) in which the notion of Life is more explicit. In fulfilling this proposal Marcuse is not rejecting the relevance of the absolute *per se* but rejecting its characterisation as a cognitive substance. Marcuse, then, is not trying to strip Hegel of his metaphysics in the tradition of the Left Hegelians: rather he intends to re-present Hegel's metaphysics as fundamental ontology. As such the task of coming to an understanding of ontology itself, and Marcuse's use of this term remains our primary concern. In completing this task I shall follow the structure of Marcuse's text.

HO is divided into two parts that reflect Marcuse's proposal. The following three chapters primarily will be concerned with the first part of Marcuse's text: "Interpretation of Hegel's *Logic* in the Light of Its Ontological Problematic: Being as Motility". In order to comprehend Part 1 of Marcuse's text I will proceed in three distinct ways. First, I wish to continue a general articulation of the concept of ontology with particular reference to the problem of ethical relativity. This will involve making the claim that for Hegel ethical relativity is a symptom of a "dirempted world", i.e. of alienation. We must therefore examine what Hegel means by this through a brief examination of his encounter with traditional ontology. Marcuse's interpretation of this encounter will be the topic of this chapter. Second, in chapter four, I will begin a more specific articulation of Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Specific attention will be directed to the importance of Marcuse's understanding of the "concept of essence" and how we may understand this concept as part of a temporal process. Third, chapter five will endeavour to draw out what Marcuse sees as the ambivalence of Hegel's ontology, specifically in relation to Hegel's Doctrine of the Concept

² S. Benhabib, 'Translators Introduction', in H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1987, p. xxi.

– i.e. the failure of Hegel's notion of the Absolute, as a cognitive substance, to close the temporal circle of Being.

3.1 *The Historic Bifurcation of the world: The Ontological Problem of Unity*³

The role of universals in philosophy and particularly socio-political philosophy is highly contentious. As indicated above any attempt to assert the existence of a transcendent supreme substance that underpins or legitimises the Being of the concrete, i.e., accounts for *all* (social) diversity, is not only antagonistic to those who assert some form of historicism, but also to any form of empiricism. A large part of this thesis is concerned with presenting an account of Marcuse's re-interpretation of how universality may be understood in Hegel's work in a manner that is consistent with the assertions of historicism, whilst also functioning as a universal ethical criterion, i.e. overcoming ethical relativism. Perhaps, then, the easiest way to commence this inquiry is to distinguish both Marcuse's and Hegel's understanding of the notion of universality from alternative accounts.

The problem of the status of universals and their relationship to instantiated particulars is not simply an abstract concern of armchair philosophers. The categorisation of the world into kinds whose constituent members share something in common seems to be an indispensable aspect of understanding our environment and developing both forms of knowledge associated with social practices, as well as the historical creation of individual subjects. Despite the insights of those who highlight the malevolent aspects of the meta-narratives of the modern period, it would seem clear that even a mini-narrative's coherence, i.e. its ability to function as a narrative, still relies on general categories: forms of unification, or what we can loosely refer to as universals.⁴ For Hegel philosophy is continually led from considerations of diverse particular instances to considerations of how these diverse things are unified. Philosophy is continually led to considerations of the universal "which is neither this nor that, which is a not-this, and with equal indifference this as well as that"⁵. Furthermore, for

³ Whilst Marcuse was not the first to draw attention to Hegel's concern with what may generally be referred to as 'alienation' he does seem to be treading new ground in his connection of this theme with Heidegger's criticism of 'onto-theology'.

⁴ The search to reveal the universal aspect of the *world* in western philosophy has since ancient Greek times taken the form of an investigation into the *Logos*. In this respect it is interesting to note Heidegger's observation that the word *Logos* etymologically derives from "to gather". Heidegger further suggests that Aristotle understood this as "all order has a character of bring together". And even more significantly Heraclitus understood *Logos* to be a "permanent gathering". The notion of permanent gathering as it unfolds in terms of a permanent movement of creation is a central component of Marcuse's understanding of *universals*. M.Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, op.cit., p.123-128.

⁵ Hegel quoted by H.Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, op. cit. p.104.

Hegel once we lose our sense of unity or oneness with the world, our comportment to the world shifts to one of *alienation*.

Marcuse suggests that Hegel interprets this sense of alienation as arising from the more general historic condition of what he terms 'bifurcation'. Later on we shall see how the notion of bifurcation is associated with Kantian notions of understanding (*Verstand*) as opposed to reason (*Vernunft*). For Hegel bifurcation is understood as the forced separation of opposites. That is, bifurcation refers to the forced separation of such aspects in our lives as: spirit and matter, soul and body, faith and understanding, freedom and necessity etc. Hegel summarised the foregoing oppositions of life (and these of course are not exhaustive of such oppositions) as having the general form of the conflict between subject and object.⁶ Importantly, Hegel interpreted the prevalence of such oppositions as a consequence of a particular historical situation. For Hegel, the condition of both epistemological and existential alienation (understood as one's separation from the world they encounter) is not some kind of immutable natural fact, but rather a particular historical comportment towards the world. Furthermore, it is precisely this historic situation that gives rise to what Hegel understands to be the necessary task of philosophy.

When the power of unification disappears from the life of man, when opposites lose their living relation to and reciprocal influence upon one another and become self-contained, the need for philosophy arises.⁷

In making this point Hegel anticipates many of the gross absurdities that we have now become familiar with.⁸ This is to say once the notion of unity is exploded and replaced with the analysis of disconnected parts and activities, then social life opens itself to categories of ill-will and hatred, which are after all categories of disunity. Marcuse will in his later political writings talk in exactly these terms, and attempt to expose the ideological aspects of forms of analytical positivism, which he regards as leading to the reification of the world. In *HO* Marcuse seeks to explain the problem of alienation as a symptom of a particular ontological outlook. Marcuse claims that the notion of bifurcation is the original problematic of Hegel's philosophy. Furthermore, Hegel's philosophy needs to be interpreted as both exposing univocal conceptions of reality, and proposing an alternative solution:

⁶ Marcuse argues that in so doing Hegel connected his historical problem to the philosophical problem that had dominated European thought since Descartes. H. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, op. cit., p. 36.

⁷ Hegel quoted by H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op. cit., p. 9.

⁸ To put things in a polemical sense, it is suggested for instance, that it is only when the power of unification disappears that acts of war can be described as peace agreements, the destruction of universities can be described as educational reform, the introduction of regressive taxation systems can be described as beneficial to the public etc. And of course, one of the negotiating techniques of any form of social restructuring is the insistence on "de-linking" issues.

... a solution that moves beyond a juxtaposition of fixed subjectivity to a fixed objectivity: "to grasp the having-become of the intelligible and real worlds as a becoming, to grasp their being as product and as a producing."⁹

Marcuse thinks the political consequences of this are clear.

The fact that Hegel goes beyond the traditional opposition of subjectivity and objectivity to their original unity has crucial significance, for it makes the dimension of historicity accessible. Human history no longer happens to take place in a world that is essentially its other, but occurs in unity with the happening of this world without losing its essential uniqueness in this process.¹⁰

In reference to Hegel's attempt to move beyond the bifurcation of the world, Marcuse insists upon the need of preserving the realms of the subjective and the objective: "... whenever being is encountered it appears through the difference between subjectivity and objectivity. Being is posited in a dualistic form in which neither subjectivity nor objectivity can be reduced to the other."¹¹ Marcuse calls this the "Absolute Difference within Being".¹² In stressing that "Being has the fundamental character of being 'split' into two...", Marcuse is making the point that this "...fundamentally split and dual character of being is the ground of its *motility*, of its happening."¹³ Indeed, Marcuse argues, it is precisely because Being has this character that it is able "...to bring itself about, it actualises itself." As such Marcuse interprets Hegel as concerned to present an account of Being – the unity of beings – where neither subjectivity nor objectivity is subsumed in the other. The point being made here is that Marcuse interprets Hegel, from the very beginning, as being concerned to present an account of unity that preserves difference. Marcuse thinks that it is possible to re-interpret Hegel's ontology in a way that overcomes alienation but does not assert the identity of the subject and object, as Jay thinks.¹⁴ This is not because Marcuse associates difference with some kind of intrinsic value (i.e., a diversified world is somehow simply a better world than a homogenous world). But because we cannot experience the world outside of difference. Indeed, difference as the *other* is a necessary element in Hegel's principle of subjectivity.

⁹ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op. cit., p.14.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.192.

¹¹ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*, op.cit., p.4.

¹² See ch.3, 'The Absolute Difference within Being: Equality-with-Self-in-Otherness. Being as Motility,' ibid.

¹³ Ibid., p.42.

¹⁴ M.Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination*. Op.cit., p.73.

3.2 *Universality: A solution to ethical relativity?*

In order to appreciate how all the above issues unfold and impact upon the problem of ethical relativity, it will be beneficial to retrace our steps, and once more briefly rehearse what the problem of universals involves. Bertrand Russell, whilst arriving at conclusions vastly different from the perspective of this thesis, presents a succinct account of the problem surrounding universals. For Russell, Plato was the first philosopher to articulate what was at stake in how we understand universals.¹⁵ Russell tells us that Plato was especially concerned with issues such as *justice*.

If we ask ourselves what justice is, it is natural to proceed by considering this, that, and the other just act, with a view to discovering what they have in common. They must all, in some sense, partake of a common nature, which will be found in whatever is just and in nothing else. This common nature, in virtue of which they are all just, will be justice itself, the pure essence the admixture of which with facts of ordinary life produces the multiplicity of just acts... The word will be applicable to a number things because they will all participate in a common nature or essence. This pure essence is what Plato calls an "idea" or "form"...The "idea" *justice* is not identical with anything that is just: it is something other than particular things, which particular things partake of. Not being particular, it cannot itself exist in the world of sense. Moreover it is not fleeting or changeable like the things of sense: it is eternally itself, immutable and indestructible.¹⁶

As is well known Plato's answer to the problem of accounting for what is common to various particulars – their essence – in a way that cannot be reduced to any one particular, was to articulate his "theory of forms". That is, Plato presented an account of transcendent universals (forms) that are ontologically separate (*ante rem*) from the particulars that imperfectly participate or reflect the universals essential form. In so doing Plato located particular instances in the realm of appearance, and universals in the realm of reality (an important distinction which is preserved but radically altered in Hegel's account of universals). In so doing, as Heidegger points out in the following passage, Plato effectively devalued the philosophic notion of appearance, and with it the value of "this world".

¹⁵ It is unlikely that Plato was the first philosopher to address the problem of universals. Rather it would seem that in relation to the broader understanding of universals as an ontological, epistemological and ethical grounding Plato was clearly following a tradition established at least as early as some aspects of pre-Socratic philosophy, i.e. the one over the many problem. Russell's account, however, will serve the purpose of introducing this topic. For a good account of Hegel's relationship to Ancient Greek philosophy in respect to the question of Being see H. Gadamer, 'Hegel and the Dialectic of the Ancient Philosophers, in *Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1971, p.5-35.

¹⁶ B. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, OUP, Oxford, 1991, p.52.

It was the Sophists and in Plato that appearance was declared to be mere appearance and thus degraded. At the same time being, as *idea*, was exalted to a suprasensory realm. A chasm, *chorismos*, was created between the merely apparent essent below and real being somewhere on high. In that chasm Christianity settled down, at the same time reinterpreting the lower as the created and the higher as the creator. These refashioned weapons it turned against antiquity (as paganism) and so disfigured it. Nietzsche was right in saying that Christianity is Platonism for the people.¹⁷

Two points need to be made here. First, in the sense that Plato and those who have followed his lead are asserting "real being somewhere on high" they can be described as asserting the doctrine of realism. Which is to say they ultimately assert some version of univocal being in the ahistorical manner discussed above.¹⁸ They invoke an external authority. Second, from at least Plato onwards, the problem of accounting for the unity of the world, i.e. ontology, has been concerned with ethical problems. And ethical problems have been concerned with accounting for the unity of the world. Indeed, Marcuse's call for a 'concrete philosophy' is a call for precisely this kind of hermeneutical investigation into the correlation between these two realms. In Chapter Two we saw how Marcuse places considerable significance upon the Heideggerian distinction between the ontic and the ontological, and with it the specific forms of understanding; *existentiell* and *existential*. Whilst it is not necessary to detail what the relationship is between these terms a brief statement is required. A short quotation from Dorothea Frede will suffice.

Heidegger's method of "uncovering" proceeds on two levels. He distinguishes between (a) the "ontic" level of the factual (for human existence Heidegger introduces the special term "*existentiell*") that is open to observation, the level of field studies for the phenomenologist, and (b) the "ontological" level, the phenomenological description of the deep structures that underlie and explain the ontic (for the structure of human existence Heidegger introduced the term "*existentiale*").¹⁹

One of the consequences of this distinction, for Marcuse, is that whilst most contradictions that emerge within the ontic structures of societies (e.g., matters of justice) can only be

¹⁷ M. Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1959, p.106.

¹⁸ For a discussion concerning the extent to which Hegel's notion of the Absolute obliges us to class him as a realist see; T. Wartenberg, 'Hegel's idealism: the logic of conceptuality', in F. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p.102-129.

resolved within those structures, other contradictions may well lead beyond them. Consequently, there is a vast difference between resolving matters of justice *within* a particular judicial system, and resolving incompatibilities *between* the judicial systems of different worlds. This is to claim that a disagreement that manifests itself at an ontic level may reflect a more significant disagreement between competing conceptions of the ontological (perhaps one that is becoming and the other which is passing away). Or to put in another way disagreement about what constitutes the "deep structures that underlie and explain the ontic" can only manifest itself at an ontic level. Hubert Dreyfus draws our attention to the strategic implications of Heidegger's distinction with the following words:

Although Heidegger is interested only in the *existential* structure of Dasein, and so dismisses Kierkegaard's Christian-dogmatic account as *existentiell*, he nonetheless needs an *existentiell* story himself since he admits that there is no way to approach the general structure of Dasein except by spelling out a specific way of life in which that basic structure is perspicuously revealed. Heidegger calls the way of life that provides *existentiell* access to Dasein's make up "authenticity." It is a way of life that consists of Dasein's owning up to what it really is, rather than covering up or disowning the anxiety occasioned by its unsettledness.²⁰

However, the point that I am attributing here to Marcuse is a stronger one than Dreyfus's suggestion that there is "... no way to approach the general structure of Dasein except by spelling out a specific way of life in which that basic structure is perspicuously revealed." For I am not simply claiming that the *existentiell* provides a point of entry into questions concerning the existential. Nor, am I simply claiming that Marcuse wishes to present the concept of "authenticity" in a way that moves beyond the ethically neutral manner of Heidegger. Rather, Marcuse wishes to directly connect ethics to ontology in an evaluative way. In fact, for Marcuse the association of ethics with fundamental ontology is a logical demand of fundamental ontology itself. Katz describes this imperative in the following way;

Despite [Heidegger's] repeated disclaimers, however, the extrapolation of the analysis into the domain of ethical or sociological critique does not necessarily violate the fundamental tenets of Heidegger's work, even if it departs radically from his intentions. Indeed, it was Marcuse's claim that the elaboration of the results of Heidegger's investigations in the direction of political criticism was a step mandated by the internal logic of the fundamental ontology itself. With certain

¹⁹ D.Frede, 'The question of being: Heidegger's project', in C.Guignon, *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, CUP, Cambridge, 1993, p.55.

²⁰ H.Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, MIT Press, Massachusetts, 1991, p.304f.

important adjustments, the theory of being could reveal the link between 'the possibilities of authentic being and its fulfilment in authentic action'.²¹

As such, for Marcuse, a crisis of faith does not begin in the cloistered environment of an academy and then spread out into the broader community. Rather, it is precisely because there is a very real crisis of meaning occurring within the specific social practices and institutions of a community that Marcuse, like Hegel, insists the need for philosophy arises. Consequently, at some point, in any significant disagreement, the question will arise as to whether the disagreement can be resolved within a particular ontic-discipline, or whether it reflects a deeper historic crisis, i.e., an ontological crisis. If the disagreement is beyond a specific discipline (i.e., no resolution is possible within the current framework of that discipline), then it may well be that the crisis is an ontological one. Indeed, the historical oppositions (spirit and matter, faith and understanding etc) that so concerned Hegel were manifested precisely in the ontic structure of society. Yet Hegel argued their solution could only be found at what Marcuse is terming an ontological level. Most certainly, neither Marcuse or Hegel suggest for one moment that ontological problems can be directly accessed without reference to concrete historical conditions. But they are asserting, that whilst there are distinct ontic and the ontological questions, such questions are not separate. In a comment that pre-empt's Kuhn's notion of paradigm shifts that occur within the (ontic) sciences, Hegel draws attention to this dynamic interaction between conceptions of the ontological and the character of the ontic world we inhabit: "All revolutions, in the sciences as well as in world history, occur only because spirit has altered its categories."²²

It is with the foregoing in mind that Plato's formulation of the problem concerning universals has enduring interest.²³ For whilst Plato's realist answer, an answer that presupposed a bifurcated world, may have been unacceptable to Hegel's historical method, Hegel accepted Plato's recognition that problem of universals was a legitimate one. Indeed, one of Plato's central concerns was overcoming the subjectivism, and associated scepticism, surrounding concepts such as *justice* and the *good*. This is to interpret Plato as being concerned with more than resolving matters of justice and the good within the current institutional (ontic) framework of Athens. For Plato was also concerned with what it is that *grounds* such diverse instances of, for example, justice. The notion of universals has then a history associated with attempting to get to the *truth* of, amongst other things, specific human values such as *justice*, *happiness*, *goodness* etc. In so doing it is an attempt to overcome the oppositions that are encountered in a world that is apparently fleeting and changeable – a world that is apparently

²¹ B.Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, op.cit., p.71.

²² G.Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1970, S246.

in opposition to the very notion of what is traditionally understood to be the meaning of truth, i.e., *essentiality*. Significantly, disagreement about the central values within, and between, communities is seen from this view to be yet another form of bifurcation. The ethical relativism that surrounds diverse human values confronts us as yet another form of alienation. For as soon as we embrace one form of social justice we are in some way excluded or alienated from others. But what is more, the very presence of another form confronts us with questions concerning the truth of our own being, i.e. it confronts, and questions, the very aspects of our lives that we take to be meaningful. The dilemma we face is how to overcome this separation whilst at the same time opening ourselves up to the diversity of the world. Indeed, Marcuse states:

For [Hegel] the real issue concerns the difference between subjectivity and objectivity as made possible by the original unity, and this original unity itself as the condition of the possibility of difference.²⁴

It is in regards to this dilemma (which I am arguing is both ethical and ontological) that Hegel accepted not only the legitimacy of the problem that Plato raised concerning universals, but also Plato's appreciation of the *kind* of solution that would be required. Hegel accepted that the kind of solution that would be required to account for the unity of the world, whilst preserving diversity, would be one that could not be reduced to an particular instant of diversity in the world. Hegel, however, in order to preserve the modern idea of historical subjectivity rejected any Platonic conception of a supra-sensible world that this world's particular entities simply participated in. Hegel would revitalise the notion that universals need to be grasped as processes not as things.

3.3 The Presuppositions of Traditional Logic

Of course, it is possible to assert the importance and existence of universals in ways distinct from Plato. For our purpose it is enough to suggest that such accounts eventually coalesce into one, or a combination of, four alternatives;²⁵

²³ Marcuse directly treats the significance of Plato's presentation of this problem, in regard to the dialectic, in 'On the Problem of the Dialectic', op.cit.

²⁴ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.27.

²⁵ Clearly the debate over universals is more involved than I have indicated here, but there does seem to be a consensus that most positions can be accommodated within these four broad categories. See S.Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994, p.387. Also *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, OUP, Oxford, 1995, p.887. And *A Companion to Metaphysics*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1995, p.502.

1. Those that follow the Aristotelian tradition of asserting that universals exist in things (*in re*) but not independently of them. Hegel can be broadly interpreted as being located within this tradition.

2. Versions of conceptualism that view universals as reflections of the propensity of the mind to group things together (*post rem*) ;

3. Nominalism that reduces universals to simply what can be described by the same word (*flatus vocis*).

4. Alternatively, the problem of universals has, and continues to be approached by simply dissolving it into a non-problem. This is most evident in various versions of empiricism, which insist that universals are simply a confused way of thinking about entities that are themselves particular, i.e. the only category that exists is that pertaining to diverse and irreducible particular facts as encountered by the senses.

Marcuse argues that Hegel rejected all but the first of the above accounts. Not only did Hegel consider that the alternative kinds of accounts arguably fail to address the problem of relativity, but more specifically, for Hegel all three positions reflect what he claims are the flawed presuppositions of traditional logic. And it is precisely these flawed presuppositions that Hegel thinks contribute to the creation and maintenance of historical social practices that perpetuate a bifurcated world. For Hegel these presuppositions must be abandoned if a solution to humanity's alienation (and for Marcuse, *reification*) is to be overcome. Indeed, for both philosophers their abandonment is no less than a pre-condition for freedom. What then are these presuppositions?

Marcuse argues that for Hegel all previous ontology has in different ways presupposed:

1. A ready-made or given *world*, which is present in-and-for-itself. This world is outside of thought and is distinguished from the empty form of thought.

2. The object as something that is complete and ready for-itself. Objects as such are distinguished from thought, whilst thought itself is considered to be essentially incomplete and dependent on the object.

3. Objectivity and subjectivity are defined as independent spheres separated from one another, such that thought can never go beyond itself and penetrate the thing-in-itself.²⁶

Not only does Hegel reject any Platonic type solutions to the problem of universals that assert some kind of prior, separate or other-worldly "form", but Hegel also insists that if the bifurcations of this world are to be overcome that such a solution cannot presuppose either the fixed and given identity of the world, or the subject encountering the world. In effect Marcuse is interpreting Hegel as pre-empting Heidegger. For Hegel both the subject and the world are involved together in an organic (which is to say dynamic) unity of the kind Heidegger would call being-in-the-world or 'Worldliness'. Consequently, such a solution cannot presuppose the separation of the subject and the world in a way that reduces either the subject or the object to the ontological dependence on the other. Rather, Hegel's notion of an organic unity involves a hermeneutical correlation between all the constitute elements. It is at this point that Marcuse asks: Has not Kantian philosophy already achieved this task?

3.4 Kant's Concept of Transcendental Synthesis

Hegel's encounter with Kant is well documented, and as Marcuse follows a standard interpretation of Hegel's criticism of Kant's subjectivism and formalism, it is not necessary to go into any detail.²⁷ However, it is necessary to note that Marcuse argues that Hegel does find truth in Kant, particularly in his questioning of how synthetic judgements *a priori* are possible? In fact for Marcuse the concept of the synthetical will be Hegel's beginning point for the more precise conceptualisation of the meaning of being.²⁸ It will be his beginning point because it offers Hegel the means for presenting truth in a speculative form that embodies motility rather than thinghood, and in so-doing it opens the realm of possibility. It is with the issue of possibility that I will begin this section.

²⁶ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*, op. cit., p.189f. Marcuse is drawing an obvious parallel between Hegel's critique of the tradition's presuppositions and Heidegger's critique, especially Heidegger's notion of 'Being-in-the-World'. What is referred to here as the presuppositions of traditional ontology I also take to be associated with what Habermas refers to as the "philosophy of the subject" (which is not to be confused with the principle of subjectivity).

²⁷ It is not my intention to comment on the validity of Hegel's criticism of Kant, but rather to lay down the necessary background for understanding Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel. For a full account of Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel's encounter with Kant see, *Hegel's Ontology*, ch.2, 'The Attainment of a New Concept of Being through an Analysis of Kant's Concept of Transcendental Synthesis'. For a similar, and perhaps more accessible, account of many of the aspects raised in this chapter, and in particular Hegel's relationship to Kant, see, J. Habermas, 'From Kant to Hegel and Back again - The Move Towards Detranscendentalization', op.cit.

²⁸ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op. cit., p.24.

As is well known Kant identifies synthetic a priori judgements as 1) those in which the truth of the predicate is not contained in the subject (synthetic) 2) those whose truth is prior to sense experience (a priori). However, Marcuse's interest in synthetic a priori judgements is not simply epistemological. For Marcuse, when Kant raises the possibility of synthetic a priori judgements he is raising the issue of possibility per se. And the issue of possibility has both ethical and ontological consequences. Indeed, the issue of possibility understood as the realisation of the possible, the possible actualisation of the not-yet, possibility beyond the authority of the fact, is an issue that is at the heart of Marcuse's political philosophy. It is an issue, as Katz indicates, that is expressed in Marcuse's early essays, which confront the neo-Kantian attempts to ground Marxist theory on a transcendent philosophical base.

The concept of 'possibility' as the central concept of the transcendental method can certainly, in the last analysis, put reality into question. Concretely, it can lead to the dissolution of the ossified categories of reality, and violently shake this existing reality itself.²⁹

Whilst it is not necessary to go into Marcuse's confrontation with these neo-Kantians, it is of interest that Marcuse thinks their attempts to secure the ethical and epistemological foundations of Marxism detract from the political possibilities of transcendental criticism.³⁰ It is of interest because the reason that Marcuse thinks their attempts fail to provide this foundation are located within the Kantian division between phenomenon and the thing-in-itself. This of course is precisely the criticism that Hegel directed to Kant. With this in mind we can now turn to Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel's critique.

Marcuse claims that in an effort to overcome the fixed categories of thought that lead to the bifurcation of the world, and which constitute the presuppositions of the Western tradition, Hegel asserted the significance of the absolute as totality.

Hegel's intention is to attain an 'absolute' meaning of Being in relation to which all that is can be understood in its mode of Being without presupposing, however, a generalised unitary ontological meaning from the outset. On the contrary, the plurality of all oppositions among beings should be preserved in and be a part of meaning. This meaning of Being should at the same time provide the possibility of overcoming the fixed oppositions of subjectivity and objectivity, consciousness and

²⁹ H. Marcuse, quoted by B. Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, op.cit., p.74.

³⁰ For a more detailed account of Marcuse's confrontation with the neo-Kantians Karl Vorlander and Max Adler see *Ibid.*, p.74.f.

'being' through an originally unified principle which would allow us to understand this duality in its proper unity as proceeding from itself.³¹

Marcuse then asks: "Has not Kantian philosophy already achieved this task?" Has not the notion of transcendental subjectivity already "...given back to philosophy the claim and the ground of original unity?" In response to this kind of question Hegel asserts that Kant did not go far enough. For Hegel, Kant's "transcendental ego" ultimately collapses back into subjectivism, and as such perpetuates the dualistic presuppositions of traditional logic.

But it is Hegel's thesis that Kant had quickly abandoned on this ground and had speedily let go of this already attained truth. Furthermore, in the course of his investigations Kant had fallen back into the pure philosophy of understanding and into the futile subjectivity of reflexive 'understanding'. Kant himself had thus once more, and in the crassest form, recreated the untrue dualism of consciousness and 'being', of subjectivity and objectivity.³²

Certainly, Marcuse argues that Hegel accepts Kant's view that unity is never, and in no case given, in the objects themselves. Rather, the unity of the object (and the world) is constituted by a combination carried out by the subject. For Kant this combination is of course the synthesis of the categories entitled the understanding or reason. Marcuse claims that Kant ultimately defines this combination as "...the unifying unity of pure self-consciousness, the *I think*." ³³ However, Marcuse goes on to claim that;

Hegel wants to move beyond the empty-identity of the pure *I-think* to a concrete actual synthetic happening to which content already belongs to form.³⁴

This is to say that Hegel takes seriously Kant's investigation into the synthetic a priori, and wants to preserve Kant's philosophical insights, which involve moving beyond a conception of a given world. But he wishes to do so in a manner which does not collapse back into Kant's subjectivism and empty formalism. Indeed,

Hegel claimed that as a transcendental principle, the original synthetic unity had to be viewed not only "subjectively, but also objectively", "not only in the form of knowing, but also in the form of being".

³¹ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.22.

³² Ibid., p.23.

³³ Ibid., p.25f.

³⁴ Ibid., p.26.

...Hegel's answer to the Kantian question concerning the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgements then is that reason constitutes this fundamental condition ...Through reason both thought and being are united. The world, the given manifold of beings, is not an object of the human I; it is not something which stands over against it in some ontologically appropriate form. The world belongs quite fundamentally to the being of the I. It is the manifold through whose synthesis the I can first *be*. Likewise *all* being first is through such a synthesis. The world belongs to the human subject in a special way, and accordingly, the synthesis is also a special synthesis, which as such can be ascribed to no other being. Hegel defines this mode of being as *Life*.³⁵

It is from this position that Marcuse claims we are in a position to see clearly Hegel's ontological, as opposed to epistemological, program.

Hegel's task is now clear. To demonstrate this synthesis of the original synthetic unity to be a "principle" and to render intelligible the manifold modes of being or the dimensions of determinate being and their unity as various modes of absolute synthesis.³⁶

The principle that Hegel develops, of course, is what Habermas refers to as the principle of subjectivity: the process of the development of the self-consciousness through the subject's recognition of itself in the other, and its continual re-interpretation of this process. But more than this the principle of subjectivity also asserts that spiritual forms, which have reached the stage of self-consciousness, recognise that their particular interpretation of the world is itself a particular interpretation.³⁷ For Marcuse, the manifestations self-consciousness are, from the outset, contingent and fallible. As such truth is to be found in the correlation between individual historical interpretations and the fundamental structures of existence.

As factual realizations, all historical situations are only historical transformations of such fundamental structures, which are realized in different ways in any order of Life...Truth and falsehood would in that case lie in the relation of the factual realisation to such fundamental structures.³⁸

³⁵ Ibid., p.34 and p.36.

³⁶ Ibid., p.37.

³⁷ J.Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1994, p.14.

³⁸ H.Marcuse quoted by B.Katz, *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation*, op.cit., p.75.

How Hegel's principle of subjectivity unfolds will be addressed in detail in Part Three of this Thesis. Our immediate task now is to examine how Hegel's program, particularly in the *Logic*, enables him to move beyond the static categories of traditional logic to a presentation of these fundamental structures as "various modes of being-in-movement". As we shall see, for Marcuse, the dynamic categories of the *Logic* are expressed in a way that contribute to Heidegger's notions of Worldliness and historicity.

Chapter Four: Marcuse and the *Science of Logic*: (I) The Doctrine of Essence as a Temporal Structure.

4.1 Overview

At the end of Chapter Two I indicated Marcuse's intention to present a new interpretation of Hegel's *Science of Logic* by placing "... the newly acquired concept of Being at its centre, and by taking account of the rootedness of this logic in a fundamental groundwork oriented to the ontological concept of Life and its historicity." I indicated that the shape of Marcuse's re-interpretation, in the light of this newly acquired concept of Being, will involve bringing to the forefront those aspects which enhance Heidegger's notion of temporality.

The following two chapters will present the detail of Marcuse's re-interpretation of the *Science of Logic*. In this chapter specific attention will be directed to the importance of Marcuse's understanding of the concept of *essence*, and how we may understand this concept as part of a temporal process. In order to establish the background for examining Marcuse's presentation of the Doctrine of Essence I will first locate the *Logic*, as a form of ontology, in relation to what is normally understood as formal logic. To assist in this process I will draw upon Charles Taylor's notion of *necessary embodiment*. Following this I will briefly comment upon what Marcuse thinks are the significant aspects of the first book of the *Logic*, the 'Doctrine of Being'.

It is not my intention to evaluate the scholarship or the accuracy of Marcuse's interpretation of the *Science of Logic*. Rather, having accepted the contemporary relevance of his early philosophical project, a project which I have suggested his early essays do little more than define, I will continue to present *HO* as the culmination of Marcuse's early work. I will argue it is in this text that Marcuse made the most progress in actually developing the lines upon which a concrete philosophy could be created, i.e., as an ontology expressed in terms of a radical form of historicity. Furthermore, I will argue that one of the most important aspects of Marcuse's position is his concept of *essence*.

Marcuse thinks the radicality of Hegel's position is revealed primarily through the second book of the *Logic*, the 'Doctrine of Essence'. Specifically, in contrast to accounts of reality that present unity in terms of either some kind of hyper reality or the unknowable thing-in-itself, Marcuse interprets the Doctrine of Essence as a rehabilitation of the realm of appearance. To facilitate an appreciation of Marcuse's reading I will also draw upon his 1932 essay 'The Concept of Essence'. Informed by both these works, I will continue to argue that it is because Marcuse takes 'appearance' seriously that Hegel's concept of essence enables

the presentation of reality as a hermeneutical shifting of the ontological status of both the subject and the object. And it is this hermeneutical aspect of reality that demands that the world be grasped in terms other than correspondence with empirical facts, or as the handiwork of humanity (i.e., it opens the way for Hegel's principle of subjectivity). For Marcuse, Hegel's concept of essence reveals the underlying process or motility that characterises the general structure of reality. Furthermore, this motility is itself distinguished by a form of temporality, i.e., historicity.

In presenting Marcuse in this way it is important to recognise that Marcuse is not simply reading into Hegel a Heideggerian perspective. Rather, Marcuse claims that this perspective is present within Hegel's work as 'remarkable schism'.

The determinations of the Being of Life given there refer to the process of Life in its *historicity*. But the *Logic* had supposedly transcended all categories of historicity. Life overcomes its own historicity on the road to the essentially ahistorical form of Absolute Knowledge; Life passes *beyond* its own historicity. The schism that becomes visible at this point is the upshot of a decisive transformation in the basic ontological framework. Admittedly, this transformation was completed already with the *Logic*, but its consequences reverberate throughout the entire system of Hegelian philosophy.¹

It is as a result of Marcuse's claimed discovery of this schism that he is led back to Hegel's earlier writings where the concept of Life is more fully preserved. These writings are principally the *Early Theological Writings* and the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which are dealt with in the second part of *HO*. Whilst Marcuse's approach makes it somewhat difficult to grasp the significance of his claims in the first section of his text (i.e., the section dealing with the *Logic*), it is necessary to follow Marcuse's sequence in order to comprehend the final impact of his position. Despite the demand upon readers of this thesis I shall follow Marcuse's order of presentation.

4.2 Hegel's Two Senses of Universality

We have seen that Hegel rejects the fundamental presuppositions of traditional logic. The immediate questions are: "what is Hegel's alternative? and what connects it to traditional logic?" In responding to these questions it is suggested that there are at least two distinct senses in which Hegel presents his account of universality. The first accords with traditional conceptions of a hierarchical ordering of universals, with the most general of all universals

¹ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op. cit., p. 4f.

being that which grounds *all* reality, and which in effect has the status of God. The second sense is a radical Aristotelian notion of an organic unfolding of all universals, including its most general form, within the realm of the historical. It is this second sense that I have been referring to as the principle of subjectivity. And it is this second sense that Marcuse is concerned. Both senses of ontology are connected by a drive towards understanding the *ground of existence*. To facilitate our understanding of Hegel's radical re-presentation of logic as ontology it will be of benefit to briefly contrast it to the traditional understanding of formal logic.

Michael Inwood² suggests that Hegel uses the term 'universal' in at least two distinct ways. First, he distinguishes between universal and particular in a manner that corresponds to the generic and the specific. A universal is a concept that is applicable to characteristics that are inherent in all entities of a given type. A particular applies to only some of those entities. In this sense universal and particular are terms which lend themselves to a hierarchical ordering: e.g. in biology; species, genus, family, order etc. In this sense they are relative terms, i.e., in one instance functioning as a universal, and in the next as a particular. In this regard Hegel's entire system is often presented as an attempt to give a general or universal account of the necessary structure of reality in general (*The Logic*), and also to apply it to the specific realms of nature (*Philosophy of Nature*) and spirit (*Philosophy of Mind*).³ It is in this sense that Hegel's use of the term 'universal' broadly accords with its traditional understanding within formal logic.

However, Inwood like Marcuse, also reads Hegel as presenting a second sense of universality that is more radical⁴. In this second sense Hegel neither presents universals as some kind of other-worldly eternal categories (Platonic idealism), or naturally occurring groupings within the physical world (empiricism). Rather, universality is presented as process of *becoming* that takes place within the realm of what Hegel understands to be history. Importantly this process is an organic development that takes the form of increasingly more adequate universal concepts culminating in the realisation of God. The notion of organic is distinguished here from any static or complete notion of the whole, such as either mechanistic interpretations of reality, or the creation of reality by a God who exists outside of history. Consequently, in

² M. Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*, op.cit. p.303.

³ As Thomas Wartenberg argues this is in effect to reduce Hegel's logic to that of 'category theory' which in turn collapses into conceptualism as discussed above. Whilst Marcuse certainly does not understand Hegel in this way at this stage of my argument to speak in these terms will do no violence to Marcuse's final position. For a good summary of different sympathetic readings of Hegel see T. Wartenberg, 'Hegel's idealism: the logic of conceptuality', in F. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p.102-129

⁴ At this level Marcuse's reading of Hegel is quite uncontroversial. As such I am using here both Inwood and Marcuse to simply introduce this reading.

opposition to realist accounts, Hegel insists that universality, particularity, and individuality are not logically, ontologically, or epistemologically separated from each other.

the concept of logic prevalent till the present is based upon the unshakeable distinction drawn by ordinary consciousness between the *content* of knowledge and its *form*, or between truth and certainty.⁵

For Hegel it is only by presupposing the distinction between content and form, truth and certainty, that traditional logic can assert the existence of an external world which is given to the mind, and which remains untouched by the mind. Indeed, as Charles Taylor points out

Most philosophers and people think of logic as a study of conceptual relations which is necessarily formal, touching our way of thought, and not the contents that we think about, i.e., the legacy of Cartesian dualism.⁶

As we have seen Hegel rejects this conception of reality as the assumption of the erroneous presuppositions of traditional ontology. We have also seen how Marcuse claims that this is the original problematic of Hegelian philosophy, and how Hegel seeks to replace it with a conception of reality in which the mind plays its role in the constitution of the world in a way that does not reduce reality to a creation of the mind. Consequently, whilst Hegel seeks to establish the connection between content and form, truth and certainty, a connection that is fundamental in any form of historical contextualism, this should not be mistaken for some form of subjectivism. Taylor clearly makes this point.

For Hegel, thought and the determinations through which it operates (categories) are not attributes of a subject over against the world, but lie at the very root of things. The reality which we perceive as finite subjects is the embodiment of Geist or infinite subject.⁷

The point to be understood here is the broad distinction between Hegel's logic as ontology, and that of traditional or formal logic. In regard to this distinction Taylor cautions

...the *Logic* is therefore very misleading if we have in mind the formal logic with which we are familiar. It is used in the sense of Kant's 'transcendental logic'. The transcendental logic thus defines what Kant calls the categories, the necessary and inescapable conceptual structures which the world of experience must exhibit if we

⁵ Hegel quoted by H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.189.

⁶ C. Taylor, *Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1975, 225

⁷ Ibid., p.225.

are to have any experience at all... Transcendental logic comes very close to being an ontology - as saying something about the nature of things. Kant avoids this by establishing his distinction between phenomena and noumena. Hegel will have none of this and is going to offer us a transcendental logic which will also be an ontology.⁸

It is the presentation of this second sense of universality, the sense in which the infinite becomes embodied in the finite, that Hegel claims to reveal the ground of the *organic* whole. Hegel refers to this ground as the Absolute. The organic, as such, contains within it the notion of self-regulating growth. These characteristics, i.e., totality and self-regulating growth, are clarified by Marcuse in the following passages:

The absolute is the unity and totality of Being which encompasses each individual being. This unity and totality of Being, which lies at the basis of the relativity of beings, is the absolute, free from any reference or relation to another beside itself. It is the ground and basis of each relation...; it is that out of which they spring and to which they lead back.

The absolute is not something "beyond" being. On the contrary, as the origin of being it allows it to spring forth out of itself and as the "original identity" it first gives all that is a unity over and against opposites while remaining present in all the multiplicity of being as this unity.⁹

Whilst we are not yet in a position to fully comprehend the above passage we can certainly begin to appreciate the significance of what Taylor refers to as 'necessary embodiment'. T.M.Knox contributes to this appreciation by sharpening the distinction between Hegel's notion of the necessary embodiment of universals and the abstract universals of formal logic. For Knox the universals of formal logic are simply an abstraction. They have

... no organic connection with [the] particular. Mind, or reason, as a concrete universal, particularises itself into differences which are interconnected by its universality in the same way in which the parts of an organism are held together by

⁸ Ibid., p.226

⁹ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, p.12 and p.23.

the single life which they share. The parts depend on the whole for their life, but on the other hand the persistence of life necessitates the differentiation of the parts.¹⁰

Inwood also points out, in agreement with Taylor and Knox, that the "...universal is concrete, not abstract, and develops into, but maintains itself in, the particular and the individual."¹¹

Importantly, for Hegel we do not arrive at a knowledge of universals through starting with a bag of pre-conceived abstract universal categories into which we force the entities of the world. Nor do we start with a bag of static particulars and classify them according to what they share in common. Indeed, to do so is exactly what Hegel claims is one of the outcomes of subscribing to the presuppositions of traditional logic. To do so is to perpetuate a bifurcated or alienated world. As Beiser points out "...Hegel insists that no universal can exist on its own apart from, and prior to, particular things. By itself [a universal] is simply an abstraction."¹²

It is easy to overlook the radical nature of Hegel's position. For whilst Hegel is certainly concerned with the notion of eternity, he is deeply opposed to the notion of eternal entities that are simply given to an eternal ahistorical mind, regardless of whether these entities are named particulars, universals or facts of the cosmos. Specifically, in opposition to abstract and eternal accounts of the universal, Hegel insists that the universal *itself* develops through a process of particularisation and individualisation. This is so despite the fact that we cannot understand the particular without an understanding of the universal. I have suggested that this process is similar to Taylor's notion of necessary embodiment. In respect to socio-political life the notion of necessary embodiment asserts that the ground of particular entities, within a specific historic world, can only be grasped by understanding the ethical orientation of that world (the ethical is understood here as a universal). At this level Hegel would seem to be in agreement with the historically contextual approach that has been recently popularised through writings associated with post-structuralist themes.

But are not these orientations both numerous and continually changing? And if so how can we say anything lasting about the ground of entities, i.e., about universals? Once again we seem to have arrived at a point where historical contextualism comes into conflict with the notion of universality. However, it may well be the case that these kinds of questions serve to alert us to the fact that Hegel is not only addressing the question of the ground within

¹⁰ T.M.Knox, 'Translators Notes' in G.W.F.Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1967, p.323f. The fact that Knox associates universality with mind or reason as opposed to Life does not at this stage of the argument detract from the relevance of his account of universality.

¹¹ M.Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*, op.cit.p.304.

¹² Beiser, "Hegel's Historicism" in F.Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p.290.

particular historical worlds but is asking what grounds the multiplicity of these worlds themselves? When Marcuse announces that he is concerned with uncovering the ground of the historical he also is directing himself to questions concerning what it is that grounds, or enables, the appearance of a multiplicity of worlds? It is in this regard that we should note that whilst the process of the embodiment of universality is claimed to take place within history, the *Logic* is not concerned with historical instances of this embodiment. Rather it is concerned to reveal the logical structure that would enable such embodiment. It is concerned to reveal what is conceptually presupposed, what are the conditions that are necessary in order for this embodiment to take place within history. As has already been pointed out in several places, this is to draw attention to Hegel's continuation and radical transformation of Kant's transcendental methodology. With this rather brief introduction to the interpretation of Hegel's *Logic* as ontology I shall begin Marcuse's more specific encounter with this text.

4.3 *Doctrine of Being*

In chapters four and five of *HO* Marcuse draws our attention to the fact that the process of necessary embodiment is indeed a process. For Marcuse, Hegel's radical account of reality is present from the very beginning of the *Logic*. Specifically, in opposition to accounts of the world and subjectivity, in terms of given, static, or abstract categories, the Doctrine of Being seeks to establish reality as a motility of determinate beings. Whilst, for Marcuse, the characterisation of this motility, as historicity, is not revealed until the second book (Doctrine of Essence) Hegel's initial move is of crucial importance in regards to this characterisation. For Marcuse, the radical character of Hegel's position in the Doctrine of Being is most evident in the categories of finite and infinite - what Marcuse refers to as "finitude as infinity". It is towards revealing Marcuse's interpretation of these categories that the following short section is directed. Once again I shall rely upon Taylor to set the scene for Marcuse's presentation.

Taylor argues that:

Hegel's basic ontological vision is of finite being as the necessary and yet inadequate and hence vanishing vehicle of infinite being. He establishes this vision in an argument about Being... Hegel insists being can only be thought as determinate. Nothing *is* simply without having some determinate quality. Pure being turns out to be pure emptiness, nothing; nothing which is purely indeterminate is

equivalent to pure being. Hence the notion of pure being frustrates its own purpose.¹³

Hegel is as such not interested in any attempt to investigate the notion of Being *qua* Being. Rather it is the notion of determinate being that Hegel's first dialectic in the *Logic* is concerned. Following Aristotle, Hegel argues the world is characterised by a process of 'coming into being and passing away', i.e., a movement from not being to being, or vice-versa.¹⁴ In regard to determinate being Marcuse has the following to say.

The category of "determination" characterizes being as change and as in the process of changing. It concretizes the meaning of "in-itselfness". The latter is no longer defined as restfulness but as permanent movement in relation to other beings. The fullness of being is now understood as the ever new "filling of in-itselfness with determinateness". This filling is not only one that always becomes but also one that is never fulfilled.¹⁵

For Marcuse, the significance of the above passage is Hegel's presentation of determinate being characterised by endless movement. For Marcuse, this will lead not to the end of history but to an endless history. Furthermore, it is a history that takes place "as permanent movement in relation to other beings." This is in fact what Marcuse has already asserted through his notion of the 'absolute difference within Being', and which is manifested through the Hegel's concept of negation (one of the most enduring themes in both Hegel's and Marcuse's work).¹⁶ Perhaps the most fundamental aspect of Hegel's presentation of negation is the claim that a determinate being can only appear as determinate in contrast to another determinate thing. This is to make the unexceptional philosophical point that in order to experience the most basic of entities we need to understand the possibility of its negation - e.g., to experience something as square we must have in mind the possibility of not square: round, triangular etc.

However, as Taylor points out, Hegel wishes to move beyond the Kantian observation that in order to experience determinate beings the experiencing subject must apply conceptual categories such as contrast. Hegel is making a claim that goes beyond the subject that experiences reality. He is making a claim about reality "in-itself". Indeed, Hegel wishes to

¹³ C. Taylor, *Hegel*, op.cit., p.232.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.232.

¹⁵ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.53.

¹⁶ See R. Bernstein, 'Negativity: Theme and Variations', in *Marcuse: Critical Theory and the Promise of Utopia*, op.cit., p.13-29.

assert that all reality is characterised by an active struggle - all determinate beings, including subjects, are in some sense consistently involved in a process of negating each other.¹⁷

When we move on to talk of 'some-thing' and not just qualities we can see that they are not just related contrastively but they enter into a multiplicity of causal relations with each other. Many of the causal relations are potentially destructive; a 'some-thing' can be thought rather figuratively to be maintaining itself against the pressure of its surroundings.¹⁸

For Hegel, the process of negation is a process that enables determinate beings to exist as what they are - i.e., negation enables identity. But negation also displays the finite nature of most determinate beings. For all determinate beings necessarily pass away or go under. At this level Hegel is presenting a rather common sense view of reality as a process of coming into being and passing away; birth and death. However, as Taylor suggested above, Hegel's basic ontological vision is to account for the vanishing (negation) of finite determinate beings in terms of the infinite (i.e., the universal or the Absolute). In regards to the becoming of finite beings through the process of negation Marcuse claims:

The finite proves itself to be one which, in accordance with its own being, necessarily must go beyond itself and become its other. The other of the finite is, however, infinity. Finitude is, in-itself and in its very finitude, infinity.¹⁹

Marcuse refers to this as 'finitude as infinity'. In order to explain "finitude as infinity" Marcuse asks the question; Given that the character of the finite is to pass away, what does it pass away into? For, as Marcuse notes, finite beings do not disappear into nothing. In answering this question Marcuse suggests that the passing away of finite beings marks a process in which finite beings *become themselves* before rejoining the infinite unity of Life.

To insist on the perishing of the individual finite being therefore is not adequate, for the finite "has not perished in its passing away; first of all it has become *an other* finite being, which in turn is perishing as passing away into another finite being, and so on to *infinity*." In this process of perishing each individual finite

¹⁷ C.Taylor, *Hegel*, op.cit., p.234.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.234. There is an apparent similarity here between Foucault's notion of power as a pervasive and enabling aspect of social relations and Marcuse's notion of 'absolute difference within being'.

¹⁹ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.57.

being "has attained its in-itselfness, it has rejoined itself in the process." Precisely the finitude of beings has the character of infinity.²⁰

At this point a brief statement needs to be made about Hegel's concept of infinity. Hegel's conception of the infinite is distinct from any notion of the infinite as in some way limitless, or to use Taylor phrase, it is distinct from "the indefinite extension which has no inner unity." For Hegel the infinite has no relation to anything outside of itself. The infinite raises no further questions, and we can ask no further questions of it - it is, at very least in this sense absolute. Taylor further remarks:

The finite and the infinite are not separate from and over against each other. If that were the case the infinite would be related to something which was not itself. Rather the infinite must thus englobe the finite. The absolute is not separate from or beyond the world but includes it as its embodiment... The infinite cannot just include the finite as the endless progress which includes the individual terms which make it up. This would be a failure to unite the terms; there would be always more progress to go.²¹

With this in mind we can appreciate the infinite as a form of unity, as the ground of reality, as what Hegel calls the Absolute, cannot be simply identified with some kind of endless process. For if it was identified in this manner it would not be infinite in the sense of englobing the finite, but would itself be finite. Marcuse is perfectly aware of this kind of 'bad' infinity and resists invoking it. Nonetheless, for Marcuse, Hegel's paradoxical formulation that finitude is infinity enables us to glimpse Hegel's direction - reality must be comprehended in terms of the historicity of finite beings. Marcuse's task will be to add weight to this claim in his analysis of Hegel's various philosophical works. In anticipation of what this may involve it is worth quoting a passage in which Marcuse himself enthusiastically anticipates the ontological concept of Life. In this passage Marcuse announces all that is at stake in this re-interpretation of Hegel's understanding of the finite.

In the domain of ontology finitude emerges as the ontological determination (*Seinbestimmung*) of beings. The question here is not the "critical" finitude of human knowledge or of human existence in contrast to the infinity of an *intuitus originarius* - a God. The question is finitude as the ontological determination of beings in general! Even more, this determination of finitude has emerged out of a concrete interpretation of encountered beings. This means for the first time the

²⁰ Ibid., p.59. Quotation marks are Marcuse's and indicate Hegel's words.

²¹ C.Taylor, *Hegel*, op.cit., p.240.

concept of finitude is removed from the theological tradition and placed on the ground of pure philosophical ontology. It is no longer the finitude of beings *ens creatum* in contrast to a creator God that is meant here. The finite is *not* contrasted to anything else, *not* even to the infinity of beings themselves, which Hegel dismisses precisely as the "bad" infinity. From this point on, Hegel opens the wholly new dimension of the universal *historicity* of beings and clears the way for understanding the essence of the *historical*. The process of happening of finite beings is not a development towards some previously determined or undetermined goal. It is not at all a happening to and from. It is a pure happening in-itself, immanent to beings themselves. The history of humans is only a specific *mode* of this universal process and is to be understood only in unity with it.²²

In the above piece Marcuse is not only drawing our attention to a form of ontology that enables an open-ended historical development. But more importantly he is indicating that it is a form of ontology which accounts for reality in terms of a self-relating historical dimension that cannot be reduced to the 'handiwork of humanity'. Yet equally, it is a dimension in which various historical subjects associated with human being (e.g., individual selves, individual socio-political forms, individual epochs) play their role in world-shaping. This is the extraordinarily ambitious content of Hegel's philosophy.

It is at this point that Marcuse concludes his analysis of book one of the *Logic* –The Doctrine of Being. However, he does so only after noting that like all transitions in the *Logic*, the transition from Being to Essence is a transition from one structure to another. The Doctrine of Being takes the reader some distance towards understanding Being, but has ultimately proved itself inadequate. From our perspective the categories found in the Doctrine of Being, specifically those of finitude and infinity, point towards the possibility of a plurality of individual historical beings; diverse social life-forms. They do so by opening up the real possibility of history as a continuous process of actualisation, i.e., as a continuous process of diverse happenings. However, these categories are themselves inadequate as an explanation of either the unity of specific diverse social-forms, or the unity of reality more generally. They are inadequate as an account of Being. To use Marcuse's words "The Being of beings is never and nowhere constituted in the sphere of immediate thereness. This only means that *motility*, as the mode of Being of beings, has not been grasped in its depth."²³ To this end Marcuse turns to the second book of the *Logic*; The Doctrine of Essence.

²² H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, p.55.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.64.

4.4 *The Doctrine of Essence*

It was indicated above that Hegel found any kind of Platonic proposal to account for the unity of the world in other-worldly terms, or as hyper-reality, unacceptable. It was also indicated that despite Hegel's rejection of these kinds of solutions he accepted that they reflect legitimate aspects of the problem of unity. That is, they stem in part from the apparent ambiguity of the world as it is immediately encountered. On the one hand the world is essentially in a state of flux and unknowable. Yet, in order to live in the world, at even the most basic level we must have some knowledge of what is enduring or *essential* about the world and its constituents. For Marcuse the Doctrine of Essence is an attempt by Hegel to account for both unity and change in a way that does not break down into either relativism or univocal realism. Marcuse argues that Hegel achieves this by rehabilitating the realm of appearance to something more than a realm of deception. The appearance of diverse entities is a part of truth, it does not stand in opposition to truth, despite the fact that appearance is not all that truth is. The following section will expand upon these claims and introduce what Marcuse sees as the rehabilitation of appearance through Hegel's concept of essence.

In a different context Hans Gadamer draws our attention to the enduring unity of the world in the face of change, or what he terms the alien, in the following words.

I call this experience hermeneutical for the process we are describing is repeated continually throughout our familiar experience. There is always a world already interpreted, already organized in its basic relations, into which experience steps as something new, upsetting what has led our expectations and undergoing reorganization itself in the upheaval. Misunderstanding and strangeness are not the first factors, so that avoiding misunderstanding can be regarded as the first task of hermeneutics. Just the reverse is the case. Only the support of familiar and common understanding makes possible the venture into the alien, the lifting up of something out of the alien, and thus the broadening and enrichment of our experience of the world.²⁴

Whilst Gadamer approaches the problem of universality quite differently from Marcuse the above passage alerts us to an important aspect of our experience in the world. That is Gadamer draws our attention to the hermeneutical character of our experience - "There is always a world already interpreted, already organised in its basic relations, into which experience steps as something new, upsetting what has led our expectations and undergoing reorganisation itself in the upheaval." Gadamer's description of the continual broadening of the world, through the broadening of our horizons of experience, points towards the

understanding of this enduring aspect of reality as being that of motility. The broadening of the world (world-shaping) through the application of dynamic conceptual contraries (dynamic in the sense that the categories themselves are changing) can be read as the subject matter that Hegel addresses in his Doctrine of Essence - the second book of the *Science of Logic*.²⁵ To this extent, before addressing Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel's specific understanding of essence, it is worth getting some initial feel for what Hegel was attempting to accomplish in the second book of the *Logic*. John Burbidge provides a useful summary:

The second book of the *Science of Logic*, then, looks at concepts that are related as contraries. In every case, the relation between the pairs alters on our careful examination. What starts out being the essential moment turns out to be inessential, altering the meaning involved. But that altered meaning itself will not stay fixed, and the earlier relation returns, although changed by the process thought has gone through. The resolution of the paradox that results requires a new pair of terms to distinguish what is essential from what is inessential. So, for example, "identity" cannot be clearly thought without "difference"; and "difference" requires reference to "identity"...

Hegel progressively explores the many ways reflection differentiates between essential and inessential: form and content, essence and existence, thing and property, part and whole, inner and outer, actual and possible, cause and effect.²⁶

The Doctrine of Essence continues to articulate the unity of the world (i.e. it is an ontological inquiry) whilst accounting for what the critics of universality convincingly point out is a fundamental cosmological fact, viz., change or contingency. Marcuse argues Hegel attempts to do this not through some kind of reductive causal process, which will establish and perpetuate an unacceptable dualistic account of social life, and which will ultimately collapse into a static system that denies the process of Life itself. Rather, Hegel attempts to explicate the correlation that exists between distinct entities through a hermeneutical process, similar to Gadamer's expansion of our horizons of experience, which alters the meaning, and as such, the ontological status of all the entities involved, including the subject. Contrary, then, to the doctrine of realism, Hegel insists that the meaning of the world and its entities is never

²⁴ H.Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1977, p.15.

²⁵ In the sense of conceptual contraries, Hegel's Doctrine of Essence is often seen as a continuation and extension of Kant's four antinomies of reason. Indeed, as Taylor indicates "Hegel claims Kant only scratched the surface in designating four antinomies. Our categorical thought is shot through with them." C.Taylor, *Hegel*, op.cit., p.227.

²⁶ J.Burbidge, 'Hegel's Conception of Logic', in, F.Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p.99.

complete and given to us, but rather acquires its determinate meaning through the activity of thought (reason), which is none other than the continual re-interpretation of the reality. However, this is not simply a theoretical process but one of praxis.

For Hegel the life of diverse societies is the historical manifestation or embodiment of different modes of reason or what I have been referring to as ontological orientations. The problem with this contextual approach towards truth (an approach that allows for diversity) is the dilemma of relativism both within and between societies- i.e., between the distinct ways that the world is both created, and interpreted. It has also been noted that it is at this point that most readers of Hegel identify the role that the absolute eventually plays in resolving this relativist dilemma, especially in Hegel's mature system. From the beginning this Thesis has recognised that the notion of the absolute is an attempt by Hegel to locate the meaning and value of diverse life-forms within a realm that transcends individual life-forms. For Hegel, meaning and value are associated not simply within the constellation of socio-political milieux that unifies a world as a world, but in what it is that enables the appearance of worlds, as worlds. Ultimately Hegel attempts to break the relativist dilemma of historical contextualism by connecting a particular ethical life-form to the structure of reality. The ethical life-form that Hegel has in mind is one characterised by what he terms freedom, what Marcuse will name authentic being. Whilst we are some distance from being able to examine what this form of ethics entails, it is important to note at this stage two re-occurring aspects of Hegel's concept of freedom. Specifically, for Hegel freedom can only ever be realised in terms of a freedom *from* and a freedom *towards* the world. In respect to the present point of our inquiry freedom shows itself as a freedom *from* the interpretation of the world through static conceptual categories. Which is to say freedom is the freedom *towards* a continual re-interpretation, re-presentation and re-creation of the world through the dialectical development of conceptual categories (reason). Marcuse presents the Doctrine of Essence as an inquiry into this dialectical process with the intent of establishing the essential moment of reason as *motility* characterised by historicity. Ultimately this will also mean the identification of the essential aspect of freedom or authenticity with this kind of motility.²⁷

²⁷ Hegel is often criticised on the basis that his final presentation of the unity of being is ultimately realised through positing, from the very beginning, a predetermined end of history in the form of the coming into being of an all knowing cognitive substance. This kind of interpretation reflects both a criticism of Hegel's dialectical method and the outcome of this method. Specifically, as Gadamer indicates, ever since Schelling, criticism has been raised against Hegel's method on the basis that it fails to adequately show how the movement or motility of the system is first initiated. And as such Hegel's system, far from being genuinely dialectical, is forced to yield Absolute Knowledge as its final outcome. Critics claim that Absolute Knowledge has certainly been present from the beginning but as an illegitimate presupposition. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to enter into the legitimacy of Hegel's dialectical method. However, such criticism is far from decisive. As has already been noted Gadamer for one thinks there are ways around

It is at this point that critics of Hegelian conceptions of freedom raise their warning flags. For however enticing Hegel's concept of freedom may seem, it is claimed that in presenting freedom as an *essential* ethical comportment to the world Hegel masks its authoritarian character. Objections are raised that any notion of essential life already presupposes an idea of what a particular entity *is*, and never more so than when essence is linked to some kind of teleological development. Specifically, such objections point out that this kind of understanding of essence already presupposes what the appropriate teleological or purposive development towards this idea *should* be. Such objections highlight that as soon as purposive development and essence are linked, we have outlawed all but a single path of development, and laid the ground for the authoritarian destruction of diversity. These kinds of objections to teleological accounts of essence seem compelling when we begin to consider what is essential about such notions as human nature, persons, Australian nationality, family, sexuality etc. With little imagination we quickly arrive at any number of possible situations in which groups could be, and have been, persecuted for deviating from specific interpretations of essential social character – ethnic cleansing being the most violent of current examples. Essentiality, as such, is severely criticised by nearly all those who assert the priority of a plurality of worlds; the very notions of plurality and essence seem to be in contradiction with each other. If diversity is to be valued, and authoritarianism rejected, then we simply need to learn to live with the discomfort of relativity.

Marcuse is sympathetic to this line of criticism. Indeed, there are few thinkers who have taken the problems of authoritarian tendencies in society more seriously than Marcuse and the Frankfurt School. In fact much of Marcuse's own criticism of Hegel's ontology is directed against the authoritarian aspects of Hegel's thought once the Absolute as cognitive substance gains ascendancy. The emergence of authoritarianism is at least part of the tension and ambivalence that Marcuse finds in the *Logic*. However, for Marcuse, particularly at this early stage of the inquiry into the *Logic*, the above form of criticism itself often serves to prejudice the evaluation of the radical character, and possibilities of Hegel's position. For Marcuse, despite the kind of problems referred to above, Hegel's concept of essence does give at least a plausible explanation, which should not be overlooked, of the happening of diversity. After all by rejecting realist accounts of the world, including Kant's claim that there is a thing-in-itself that lies behind and determines appearance, Hegel is in part raising the same kind of objection against the meta-theories of his time as those who now wish to assert a plurality of worlds. In fact Marcuse will eventually argue that Hegel's notion of essence is not only compatible with diversity, but enables the continual creation of diversity.

Schelling type objections. See, H. Gadamer, *Hegel's Dialectic. Five Hermeneutical Studies*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1971, p. 85ff.

Central to Marcuse's argument is what he presents as Hegel's rehabilitation of appearance and contingency in opposition to its Platonic devaluation and association with falsity. Significantly, Marcuse associates appearance with the German understanding of existence; *existieren*; stepping out or emerging. For Marcuse this rehabilitation of appearance takes the form of 'to be is to show'.²⁸ Whilst Marcuse accepts that Hegel wishes to locate truth in necessity, Marcuse does not think this involves a devaluing of the existent (and contingent). For Marcuse the "...point is not to juxtapose the essential contingency of actuality to necessity ... but to grasp contingency to be the *ground* of necessity..."²⁹ It is from this perspective that Marcuse finds some of the most compelling and radical aspects of Hegel's concept of essence in the category of *appearance*. And it is to this category that attention now needs to be directed in order to continue Marcuse's alternative articulation of the absolute, i.e. Life..

4.5 *Essence as Becoming*

In presenting the concept of essence as moving towards an explanation for the unity of the world, Hegel is concerned to get beyond the observation of immediate facts. He is concerned to get beyond the realist claim the entities of the world are complete in themselves. Like Plato, Hegel is convinced that we can reach truth, and that truth must be expressed as necessity. However, truth can not be understood solely in relation to the ontic world of things and facts. This is not because we can never know the thing as it exists. Rather, it is because Hegel thinks truth (as unity) can only be articulated as the underlying *essence* or inner necessity. And this must be expressed in terms other than those applicable to the properties of an entity or determinate being.³⁰ However, unlike Platonic explanations, Hegel rejects the notion that the essential identity of any-thing is in someway grounded in an otherworldly manner. As such Hegel takes seriously the existence of this world. One might say that Hegel takes seriously the phenomenology of being. To assert, then, that there is no thing-in-itself to know is not the

²⁸ Marcuse interpretation of Hegel's rehabilitation of appearance in relation to the question of Being is a further example of the influence of Heidegger upon Marcuse's thought. Compare the following analysis of Marcuse's concept of essence with Heidegger's discussion of 'Being and Appearance' in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Compare for example the following passage: "Because Being and appearance belong together and, belonging together, are always side by side, the one changing unceasingly into the other; because in this change they present the possibility of error and confusion, the main effort of thought at the beginning of philosophy, i.e. in the first disclosure of being of the essent, was necessary for rescuing being from its plight of being submerged in appearance, to differentiate being from appearance. This in turn made it necessary to secure the priority of truth as unconcealment over concealment, of discovery over occultation and distortion. But as it became necessary to differentiate being from the other and to consolidate it as *physis*, being was differentiated from non-being, while non-being was differentiated from appearance. The two differentiations do not coincide." M.Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, op.cit., p.109f.

²⁹ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.97.

same as asserting that there is no truth to know about things. Marcuse presents Hegel's notion of truth – the universal – in a manner that can only be grasped in terms of motility.

In order for Hegel to make good this claim he first must expose how both common sense and traditional philosophy (in his opinion) erroneously understands the *thing* as the bearer of properties. As Taylor points out Hegel rejects two central aspects of this ordinary understanding of the thing.³¹ First, as we have already seen, Hegel dismisses any explanation of the unity of the thing couched in terms of unknowable substrata. Specifically, he rejects Kant's notion of the thing-in-itself. For Hegel such explanations are not only a misunderstanding of the "thing", but more importantly they perpetuate the diremption of the world, and stand as a contradiction to freedom. However, it is Hegel's rejection of the second aspect of the ordinary understanding of the thing that concerns us. For Hegel, the thing is ordinarily characterised as the peaceful coexistence of different properties. But as Taylor suggests the notion of such peaceful coexistence stands in opposition to Hegel's entire explanation of "becoming".

This is at odds with Hegel's idea of totality consisting of elements inseparably related, yet in opposition. Contradiction is the source of movement; *becoming*, whilst the notion of a thing with properties is rather that of stable co-existence. Furthermore a thing which is characterized in part by contradiction derives its necessity from embodied thought, where as the model of the thing with properties offers us a view of external, material reality as reposing ultimately on itself, as not requiring appeal to something other than itself to be consistent and self-subsistent.³²

In making the above observation Taylor is drawing our attention once more to Hegel's rejection of the presuppositions of traditional logic (as discussed above), and how they play out in our everyday understanding of life and its possibilities. Once we realise that the "... mere actuality or positivity (*Ansichsein*) of beings never and nowhere constitutes the real being of those things (what it really is)..." then the realm of possibility is open to us.³³

For Marcuse this entails grasping that reality is essentially characterised as a temporal structure - reality is in its essence historicity. What's more it is Hegel's Doctrine of Essence that opens up our understanding of historicity. Specifically, it is through the articulation of

³⁰ This seems to be the major point of Hegel's discussion concerning 'identity' and 'difference'. See C. Taylor, *Hegel*, op.cit., p.260.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.269ff.

³² *Ibid.*, p.270.

³³ H.Marcuse quoted by R.Pippin, op.cit., p.79.

the Doctrine of Essence that we can begin to appreciate how the "past is stretched along in the present". We begin to appreciate how the unity or ground of entities cannot be understood as a series of present-tenses. In relation to Hegel's concept of essence Marcuse writes:

The Being of beings in the present always lies back in their *past*. To a certain extent this an "atemporal" past, a past which is always present and *out* of which alone being comes to be. Being can only be what it is immediately in the present through recollection...By disclosing the phenomenon of recollection, Hegel opens a new dimension of being which constitutes itself as having-been -the dimension of essence.³⁴

As will become clear, by "atemporal" Marcuse means that our comprehension of reality cannot be reduced to the understanding of time as a series of present tenses. Marcuse does not mean by atemporal that reality is in some way outside of time. Marcuse thinks it is the opening up of this new dimension that separates Hegel's account of Being from the "one-dimensionality" of realism. No longer is life subject to the authority of the fact. But rather Life is characterised by a multi-dimensionality; having-been and presence, essence and being-there, the ontic world and the world as appearing, the present world and possible worlds. Significantly, then, the concept of essence presents 'essence' as constitutive process or motility. But more than this Marcuse claims that this motility is of a special kind. It is of a kind which paradoxically carries the absent into the present; the past is stretched along into the present in a way that anticipates the future. For Marcuse the concept of essence is none other than the two-dimensionality of being.³⁵

Whereas the characterization of the immediate movement of "being" -being-for-another, change, perishing, passing into another -was confined to one dimension, to the immediately present being, already through the very terms that describe essential motility -reflection, seeming-in-itself, appearance and manifesting itself

³⁴ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, p.68.

³⁵ For an account of the paradoxical presence of the absent in relation to time see R.J.Dostal, 'Time and Phenomenology' in C.Guignon (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, op.cit., pp. 146ff. In this essay Dostal connects Heidegger's notion of time, which historicity is an expression of, with Husserl's notion of time. Specifically, Dostal connects historicity with Husserl's notions of the 'retentive' and 'protentive' aspects of time. It is of interest that Husserl was one of the members of Marcuse's supervisory panel for his *Habilitationsschrift*. Indeed, Husserl recommended Marcuse for his job at the Institute of Social Research.

-its two dimensionality becomes visible. Through this two dimensionality this movement comes to constitute the essential *ground* and *unity* of beings.³⁶

For Marcuse the path to understanding the concept of essence, as a motility characterised by historicity, is through Hegel's categories of appearance and actuality. In his 1936 essay the 'Concept of Essence' Marcuse argues:

For Hegel appearance and essence are two modes of being which stand in reciprocal relation to one another, so that the existence of appearance presupposes the suppression of merely self-subsistent essence. Essence is essence only through appearing, that is, through emerging from its self-subsistence: "Essence must appear". And appearance, as the appearance of what is in itself, becomes "what the thing in itself is, or its truth." "By this token essence is neither in the back nor beyond appearance: rather, existence is appearance because it is essence that exists".³⁷

Marcuse thinks that Hegel's claim that essence "is essence only through appearing" is radically distinct from two perspectives. First, Hegel has moved beyond claiming that appearance is the appearance of some inner nature of the thing-in-itself. Hegel has moved beyond an understanding of essence as a fixed and eternal form. Rather essence is to be understood as a motility that stretches its past into the present in a way that encompasses all tenses but cannot be reduced to any single tense. It is a form of articulation that continually re-collects its past in its present appearance - an appearance that if alive is always directed towards a future. The consequence of this conception of essence is that the realisation of the essential character of a thing is as much about a process of giving-up (or negating) past appearances as it is about the becoming of the new. Significantly, this is not about giving up the past, but giving up its past manifestation. As such the process of giving up, in order to become the new, is conversational or dialectical. To the extent that we involve ourselves in a conversation, rather than a dogmatic exchange, it is necessary to continually give up or modify our position. However, Marcuse like Hegel, wishes to push this dialectical analogy further. He wants to claim that both the entities of the world, and the existential structures of reality, are characterised in this manner.

This means that essence has first become *real* through this negation. By driving itself to the ground, it has regained itself as *ground*! The plant only *is* by sublating now the seed, now the blossom, and now the fruit, by *not being*. This means that the

³⁶ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, p.71.

plant is because it is now seed, now blossom, and fruit! It has no being besides or behind the seed, blossom and fruit, but is only *as* seed, blossom, or fruit. It does not "dissolve" into these determinations; rather it is *in* them but not as merely "inward" metaphysical substance.³⁸

Marcuse is here not simply pointing out that a plant is a sequential movement of distinct material forms. Nor does he want to say that such sequential forms are causally related. Rather, he is making a very different point concerning our understanding of the meaning of a plant. Marcuse is saying that if in some sense the past forms were not still present, were not re-collected, then the present material-form of the plant would not be what it *is*. For self-consciousness the meaning of a plant is directly related to its meaning as a whole structure. And for self-consciousness the meaning of that whole structure reflects a dialectical process encompassing something like Husserl's notion of retention, attention, and protention - i.e., historicity.

The fact that the ground has been does not mean it has ceased to be. Quite the contrary, the ground as having been is permanently present, it is "timeless" past such that existence remains continuously determined by its having been and remains grounded.³⁹

However, as Benhabib has pointed out Marcuse's position reflects here an apparent tension between historicity derived from consciousness and historicity as a dialectical aspect of reality (see p.49 and p.54 above). Whether Marcuse can overcome this tension will depend upon how successfully Life itself can be presented as a subject. I will return to Marcuse's characterisation of Life in detail in Chapter Six.

The second radical aspect Marcuse finds in Hegel's notion of essence as appearing is that appearance is no longer reduced to an inferior form of being. That is, appearance is no longer reduced to a form of being characterised by deception, which truth must overcome. Indeed, beings cannot exist except through appearing. This is so, despite the fact that essence as motility insists that appearance is not *all* there is.

That which exists is appearance, first because it is a self-showing, self-revealing, and self-manifesting only; secondly because it never has its ground in itself, but as

³⁷ H.Marcuse, "The Concept of Essence", in *Negations*, Beacon, Boston, 1968, p.43. Quotation marks are Marcuse's and represent Hegel's words.

³⁸ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.77.

³⁹ Ibid., p.83.

an existent has always already extricated itself from its ground. It has left it behind for another.⁴⁰

In presenting the concept of essence in this way Marcuse is presenting fundamental ontology; he is presenting an interpretation of Hegel's fundamental structures of existence. And as we are aware Marcuse's intent is to establish the foundations for a form of authentic being. It is still too early to flesh out what this form of authenticity involves. For as Marcuse points in the above passage the categories of existence and appearance are at this stage inadequate categories; "...it never has its ground in itself". To be self-grounded in the way that Marcuse will eventually attribute to historicity the logic of essence will have to pass over into the logic of the concept.

However, at this stage we do need to take note that in is in relation to authenticity that Marcuse locates the significance of the next Hegelian category: *actuality*. Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel's position is moving towards asserting that 1) reality is fundamentally characterised by a form of motility that carries its past into the present in a way that anticipates the future 2) there is a form of being that not only realises that this is the case but can actualise itself through its own actions. This is so despite the fact that such actualisations may well be contingent and unpredictable. In order to understand the category of actuality it will be useful to also make a few brief comments concerning Hegel's notion of subjectivity.

Many commentators point out, that for Hegel the subject is no more than a series of its actions, but how we understand these actions is crucial to how we understand Hegel.⁴¹ It is in understanding these actions within a temporal structure that Marcuse's interpretation of actuality is of interest. Marcuse presents the category of *actuality* as one of the most central ontological characteristics of Life. Benhabib explains for Marcuse the category of actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) has its root in the verb *wirken*; to effect, to eventuate, to bring something about. As such;

Actuality is a form of being which has the power to eventuate itself, to bring itself about. Life is the first form of actuality, and living beings are the first actual beings. Marcuse also draws attention throughout to Hegel's Aristotelianism in

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.83.

⁴¹ A typical example of interpreting Hegel's understanding of the subject as a series of actions is to be found in A.Wood, "Hegel's Ethics", in, F.Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p.222. Wood point out that Sartre picks up on this in his existential philosophy. The point I am making is that Marcuse presentation of Hegel in regards to the concept of essence is very different from that of say Sartre's, which perpetuates a dualistic construction of the self and the world. It is because of this dualism that alienation is seen as a metaphysical fact of life for Sartre.

defining this term. For Aristotle, actuality (*energia*) is also a being that is at work, effectively engaged with its *ergon*.⁴²

Marcuse's explication of actuality is a central theme of the second part of his text, and will be developed in this Thesis in Chapters Six and Seven. At this point it need only be noted that Marcuse argues that actuality as *Wirklichkeit* has its origins in Hegel's concept of essence, and its direct connection with historicity.⁴³ This is to say that the concept of essence, in relation to historical subjects, is to be understood in terms of a process through which subjects continually appear in a plurality of forms. What is essential about the subject is its capacity to bring itself about, to actuate itself through motility. Furthermore, whilst Marcuse thinks this process purposive, and characterised by historicity, he does not think it driven towards a particular end.

The process of happening of finite beings is not a development towards some previously determined or undetermined goal. It is not at all a happening to and from. It is a pure happening in-itself, immanent to beings themselves.⁴⁴

Contrary, then, to what many critics charge, we can begin to see that Marcuse's position is not some vulgar form of Marxism, which simply asserts that once the repressive aspects of society have been abolished the true self will be able to immediately, and unproblematically present itself. The repression that Marcuse is concerned with is the repression of the process of articulation that enables the self to come into being. It is a repression that takes place through the authority of the present. It is a repression associated with the abstraction of the determinate manifestations of Life from the process of Life in a way that reduces *all that is* to a series of present facts.

For Marcuse the concrete actualisation of the *self*, characterised by happiness and freedom, is to be found in the combination of creating social practices and institutions, and in participating within them. The social aspect of this is of crucial importance for Marcuse. The actualisation of one's essence does not occur in a vacuum, but within a specific social background. Our past is always a social past, our present always a social present.

⁴² S. Benhabib, *op.cit.*, p.xxiii and p.344.

⁴³ In presenting the category of actuality as *Wirklichkeit* Marcuse is emphasising the capacity of spirited beings to 'bring themselves about'. In this sense Marcuse is separating himself from other aspects of Hegel's category of actuality. Most specifically, Marcuse is separating himself from Hegel's claim the actual excludes forms of being that are not fully rational, i.e. from the claim in the Preface of *Philosophy of Right* that 'what is actual is rational, and what is rational is actual.' In so doing Marcuse is emphasising the radical aspects of this category and de-emphasising its conservative aspects. This of course is consistent with Marcuse's entire reading of Hegel, especially in *Reason and Revolution*.

⁴⁴ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, *op.cit.*, p.55.

Being always occurs in a totality; it is an occurrence in a world, not, however, in the sense that being moves therein as in space, as if it had its "place" there. This totality holds and grounds being such that being can constitute its unity only in the being of the totality ... with the characterization of the totality of beings as a process of essential relations, being as existence is fully determined. Only now we stand before that dimension of being that can be named *actuality* in the proper and emphatic sense of the word.⁴⁵

By making the point that the appearance of a particular existent is but a moment of a larger whole, Marcuse is drawing our attention to the claim that many aspects of truth must be understood as being situated *within* historical wholes, or worlds, rather than in some otherworldly form. This is so despite the fact that the concept of essence is not yet an historical category. Marcuse is signalling that *all* worlds have a history or genealogy. It is to make the same point as the poststructuralists do, and that is, *all* worlds, or language games or whatever we like to refer to the notion of whole as, have a narrative history. For Marcuse, this history will eventually be understood as stretching into the present in a way that effects our future. Importantly, this temporality of being both actualises particular worlds, i.e. defines them as worlds, and also dictates what can and what cannot occur. It is the essential relations of social worlds that allow for the appearance of existents as specific individuals. By insisting upon the continuous actualisation of new possibilities, Marcuse is not, then, advocating some kind of radical individualism whereby social totalities, and social action can be dismissed. Rather, he is pointing out that whatever possibilities are actualised through individual actions they can only ever be possibilities that are already, paradoxically, present in their absence - they are present in their historicity.

Possibilities are indeed always already actual. Everything which I can become as this determinate person, is already there, not in the sense of mystical determination, but in the concrete relation between me and the existing manifold of situations, out of which and only in terms of which I can become what is possible for me.⁴⁶

The final point to be made in regards to this preliminary understanding of essence is to expand upon its relationship to the fundamental structures of reality. We have seen how Marcuse presents Hegel as not simply concerned with epistemology, of how we become knowledgeable. Rather, Marcuse's presentation is primarily ontological. As such, Marcuse

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.86f.

⁴⁶ H.Marcuse quoted by R.Pippin, 'Marcuse on Hegel and Historicity,' in *Marcuse: Critical Theory and the Promise of Utopia*, op.cit., p.79. Quotation from *Hegel's Ontology*.

interprets Hegel's position as going beyond simply pointing out that the concepts that different peoples have used to think about the world are continually changing. To simply observe that concepts and ideas have changed throughout social history, and that it is these changes that distinguish different peoples and different times, would be a rather banal and Whigish observation. Furthermore, it would be an observation that would more likely perpetuate than challenge the Cartesian notion of a completely self-sufficient and autonomous mind capable of transcending a pre-given world. It is in opposition to this kind of Cartesian perspective that Hegel rather rhetorically suggests that our ability to go beyond our own age, to say that of the ancient Greeks, is about as plausible as understanding "the perceptions of a dog".⁴⁷ The point that Hegel is making is again the hermeneutical point that the process of history reflects a deep change in both the ontological status of the subject and that of the world. But paradoxically it is this change or motility that is universal, i.e. is the Being of beings. The historicity of Life, the continual happening of social-diversity, the actualisation of distinct ways of living in fact reflect the inner necessity of reality.

"Now the process of reality is itself of this sort. Reality is not simply something which *is* immediately, but rather, as essential Being, it is the overcoming of its own immediacy and therefore mediates itself with itself." Essence is conceived as something which "has become", as a result that itself must reappear as a result and that enters into relation with the dynamic categories of the inessential, illusion, and appearance. In this way it is conceived as part of a process which takes place between unmediated Being, its overcoming and preservation in essence (as being-in-itself) and the realization of this essence.⁴⁸

The significance of this for Marcuse is not that Hegel is claiming that his concept of essence is an account of how things change within a particular historical world. That would too closely identify Hegel's thought with recent post-structuralist thought. Nor is it that Hegel is claiming, in addition, that his concept of essence also accounts for how one historical world changes into another. Rather, Marcuse is drawing our attention to Hegel's much stronger metaphysical claim that his concept of essence describes the process of reality itself; of how any entity at all can come-into-being, and how the universe derives its meaning. What is of specific interest for Marcuse is that Hegel's ontology – his account of Being – arises out of history itself, that is it has its origins and meaning in the world we live in. As such Marcuse thinks Hegel goes someway in overcoming the problems of what has been referred to as the doctrine of realism.

⁴⁷ Hegel quoted by F.Beiser, "Hegel's Historicism", in, F.Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p.286.

⁴⁸ Hegel quoted by F.Beiser, *ibid.*, p.286.

Consequently, if Hegel's explanation of the actualisation of being-in-the-world (to use a Heideggerian expression) is correct, then philosophy ceases to be simply an interpretative activity. It becomes a source of empowerment for the diversity of Life. It impacts upon the very ontological status of the world in terms of what kind of beings can happen. Philosophy becomes intimately linked to the actualisation of diversity. This means, for Hegel, the history of philosophy not only parallels the actualisation of the socio-political world (i.e. the world of spirit), but that this actualisation requires individual subjects to be more or less characterised by a particular philosophical comportment. And that this comportment is itself characterised by the subject's recovery of history as its own. It is for Hegel and Marcuse nothing less than a comportment characterised by freedom.⁴⁹ Consequently, for Marcuse, any concern for diversity must be preceded by a concern for the kind of ethical beings capable of actualising themselves, and their specific worlds, in accordance with what he claims is the structure of reality. Concern for diversity must entail concern for the preservation of spiritual life. And that spiritual life is thoroughly contingent. It is Marcuse's further interpretation of the structure of reality, comprehended in terms of Hegel's concept of Life, which will be the topic of the next chapter.

⁴⁹ R.Pippin makes this same point but sees it as ultimately suggesting that Marcuse has not freed himself from the clutches of Hegel's Absolute. This issue will be addressed directly in later chapters. See R.Pippin, *op.cit.*, p.80.

Chapter Five: Marcuse And The *Science Of Logic*: (II) Life as Historicity.

5.1 Summary of argument.

Chapter Three presented Marcuse's account of how Hegel's philosophy arose from the bifurcation of the historical world; from what Hegel referred to as the forced separation of opposites. Hegel claimed the need for philosophy *per se* is founded in the necessity to reconcile the multitude of forced separations that take the general form of the subject-object dualism. We saw how Marcuse argues that Hegel interpreted this problem as an historical problem. The forced separation or alienation of the self, from the social world one is "thrown", is not some kind of eternal and immutable natural condition of our existence, but rather a specific historical mode of existence. Alienation can be overcome. For Hegel such historical alienation stems directly from the presuppositions of traditional logic (ontology).

In effect Hegel's critique of traditional logic reasserted, in a number of ways, the importance of philosophy. Most significantly, in respect to this thesis, it reasserted the inseparable relationship between ontology and ethics. It was argued that for Marcuse this relationship, in part, is to be articulated through the application of Heidegger's ontic / ontological distinction, i.e., any relation to any individual being (such as another society) always presupposes an orientation to Being; there is no view from nowhere. But more importantly, it was argued that the whole question of ethical relativism could be interpreted as yet another forced separation, as yet another form of alienation. Certain kinds of confrontations with an *other*, especially confrontations between societies, are reflections of the bifurcated existence that Hegel seeks to move beyond. It is important to stress that only certain kinds of conflicts reflect forms of alienation. For, as was also argued above and as will be expanded below, Marcuse interprets Hegel's account of Being in terms that necessitate "absolute difference". All beings, including *other* cultures, are encountered as difference. "Whenever being is encountered it appears through the difference between subjectivity and objectivity. Being is posited in a dualistic form in which neither subjectivity nor objectivity can be reduced to the other."¹ It is then how we respond to this difference, what comportment we bring to the world, that determines our level of alienation from the other. However, as will be argued in Chapter Seven, such comportment cannot itself be reduced to psychology – to an internal and personal state of mind. Rather, it is an objective comportment; it is a comportment that is bound to the ontological status of the world. To this extent the legitimacy of Hegel's critique of traditional ontology, and his alternative (or at least Marcuse's interpretation), was seen to be of

considerable interest in examining the primary problem of this thesis: the possibility of a universal ethical criterion that allows for the happening of social diversity.

Chapter Four began the examination of Marcuse's claim to have found the grounding of such a universal ethical criterion in Hegel's *Science of Logic*, viz., the notion of Life, understood as an ontological concept characterised by historicity. Whilst Marcuse claims that in order to fully understand Hegel's notion of Life it is necessary to return to Hegel's earlier writings, Marcuse places considerable importance upon its development in the *Logic*. Specifically, Marcuse argues that from the beginning the categories of the *Logic* are directed towards revealing historicity as the fundamental characteristic of Being, i.e., Being is a temporal structure, not an entity or a property. Being does not have a *vorhanden* character. No more is this so than in the Doctrine of Essence, particularly in the categories of appearance and actuality. In Chapter Four it was argued that Marcuse sees Hegel as rehabilitating the notion of appearance as the emergence of an inner essence that stretches the past into the present and directs the future. This inner essence, however, is no thing-like entity, but rather a motility that constitutes the unity of particular forms of being. In respect to the diverse existents of the world, essence as motility is always embodied in a way that constitutes diverse existents as diverse, i.e. the essence of a particular entity is none other than what unifies it as a particular entity across time and in space. It is its particular form of motility, its particular constitution, which directs its future in the light of its past.

The degree to which this kind of unity simply happens as change, rather than activity, marks the freedom of specific forms of being. Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel's category of actuality as *Wirklichkeit*, as the capacity to "step out", or "bring something about", is as such an interpretation of forms of being characterised by various levels of freedom. In this respect in order to be characterised by freedom, i.e., to be characterised as an active being, essence is manifested through a continual process of appearing (showing itself) in different forms. However, whilst a particular's present existence marks the present manifestation of essence it is certainly not to be identified with all that essence *is*. Indeed, Marcuse insists upon the multi-dimensionality of being. As Heidegger would say appearance is not "the only game in town". In arguing in this way Marcuse is explicitly pointing towards the historicity of Being, he is explicitly laying the groundwork for an account of Being as an open-ended process of becoming, a process of continual organic development. Whilst this form of development is still to be filled out in the following chapters, we can say at this stage that from an ethical perspective this development is to be valued as a process or form of *motility* in and for itself. Its value is not to be accounted for in terms of where it has come from, or where it is going, but in its ability to initiate difference through activity (i.e. actuality).

¹ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*, op.cit., p.4.

In this chapter I will complete my account of Marcuse's reading of the *Science of Logic* by drawing out what Marcuse sees as the ambivalence of Hegel's ontology. Specifically, the final and most problematic book of the *Logic*, the Doctrine of Concept, will be addressed. I shall fulfil this encounter in three sections. The first section will present an overview of the role of Hegel's *Logic* in relation to his philosophy of mind. The second section will examine the notion of self-relation or mediation as an aspect of Life. In the final section I will present Marcuse's interpretation of the category of Life, as found in the *Logic*. Once again, the purpose of approaching the 'Doctrine of the Concept' is to reveal Marcuse's interpretation. It is not my intention to enter into the vast amount of scholarship associated with this text.

5.2 Relation between historicity and spirit: The absolute as the presupposition to all beings.

Seyla Benhabib reminds us that one of Marcuse's main purposes in *HO* "...is to uncover the intrinsic relation between historicity and spirit, temporality and Life in Hegel's work."² Benhabib's point is of considerable importance in focusing our attention on the fact that whilst Marcuse has some important things to say about the meaning of nature (which I will address in Chapters Six and Seven) he is not directly concerned with questions relating to nature, in the sense of inquiring into the physical stuff of the world. Marcuse's point of inquiry is an ethical inquiry into socio-political life-forms that arise from nature. Following Hegel Marcuse accepts that spirit emerges from nature. But more than this, Marcuse is concerned to "uncover the intrinsic relation between historicity and Spirit (mind)." In effect Marcuse distinguishes between the logical structure of reality characterised by historicity, and the actualisation of this logical structure in the forms of both nature and spirit. As such Marcuse's inquiry into the relation between historicity and spirit is an inquiry into the relation between the logical structure of reality and specific socio-political life-forms. To facilitate the explication of Marcuse's position the following section will map out a general account of the status of the *Science of Logic* within Hegel's philosophical system.

R.G.Collingwood interprets Hegel's *Science of Logic* as a system of concepts that function as the presupposition of all material and mental existence. Such concepts, he tells us, are "...immaterial, purely intelligible, [and] organically constructed." Collingwood further explains:

The concepts of pure logic are determinations of pure being, and all belong as necessary attributes to anything whatever...The description of them is the

² S.Benhabib, *ibid.*, p.xxv.

elaborated or developed description of anything whatever just so far as it is anything – a body or a mind or anything else, if there is anything else...³

Collingwood is not simply drawing our attention to a point made throughout this thesis, i.e., that the *Science of Logic* is primarily concerned with ontology as opposed to epistemology. He is also making the point that for Hegel, spirit (mind) itself arises out of the logical categories of Being – logical in Hegel's sense of the term. Being, or what Hegel refers to collectively as "the category" or "Idea", cannot be accounted for in terms of the historical categories of a particular subject's mind – as the handiwork of humanity. To do so would be to confuse the conceptual structure of a specific historic determination with Being itself. It would be to confuse the ontic with the ontological, the objective with the Absolute. This is so regardless of whether the subject is that of an individual person or society, or some kind of external mind designated as God. Collingwood stresses this point in the following terms:

This dynamic world of forms which Hegel refers to collectively as the Idea, is the source or creator immediately of nature and mediately, through nature, of mind. Thus Hegel rejects subjective idealism ... the theory that ideas or concepts exist only for a subject, or (as Hegel puts it) the illusion that "ideas exist only in our heads". He regards this illusion as a legacy of the Cartesian body-mind dualism, which has trained people to think that whatever is not material is mental, so that the concept, instead of being a presupposition of thought, is twisted into a mere way of thinking, an act or habit of thought.⁴

For Hegel, subjective idealism is one way that the presuppositions of traditional ontology play themselves out in relation to the realm of spirit. That is, subjective idealism asserts that the existence (rather than the meaning) of all essents is dependent upon spirit. Subjective idealism conceives all beings as emerging out of spirit. As such subjective idealism equates to the claim "to be is to be conceived." Whilst it will be argued below that spirit does indeed animate the *world* and its entities in distinct ways, it will also be argued that spirit does so in a manner that adds *meaning* to the world – spirit does not create nature, nor is nature dependent upon spirit. What is dependent upon spirit is the meaning and appearance of particular entities.

The other predominant way in which the presuppositions of traditional logic play themselves out is to make nature (and spirit) nothing more than the functioning of the mechanical or chemical world of matter (i.e., the perspective of the physical sciences). As such the physical stuff of nature is presented as *all* there is, which, it has been argued, leads to an existential

³ R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature*, OUP, London, 1945, p.125.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.122f.

crisis of meaning. It has also been argued that it is this kind of dualism or bifurcation of the world, in the above forms, that Hegel's philosophy seeks to overcome. I will return to and develop both these perspectives in Chapter Six in terms of what Charles Taylor refers to as "disengaged agency".

Here I wish only to note that it is primarily in respect to these issues that Hegel distinguishes his philosophy of "absolute idealism" from that of Kant's "subjective idealism".⁵ Hegel's *Logic* is directed towards establishing the Idea as something real in itself (objective), and not dependent in any way upon either the mind that thinks it, or the external world that emerges from it. This is to point towards the logical status of the Idea. Certainly, Hegel insists the Idea, as universality, as Being, must be embodied, however, it remains logically prior to its embodiment. For Hegel, the Idea is presupposed by all entities in order for them to be entities. The Idea is the ground of all essents.

It is in regard to the logical priority of the Absolute Idea that Hegel makes his claim that God is identified with the logical necessity of the Absolute Idea, not with mind.

It is true that [Hegel] describes God as the object which the science of logic studies, but God is not for him a mind – that is a falsely anthropomorphic way of conceiving Him; God is the self-creating and self-subsisting world organism of pure concepts, and mind is only one, though the highest and most perfect, of the determinations which God acquires in the process of self-creation which is also the process of creating the world.⁶

One of the ways God appears in the world is as spirit. However, the essence of God is not spirit but the Absolute Idea. The ontological necessity of the Absolute, as opposed to the contingency of spirit, will be of considerable significance when we come to assess Marcuse's political philosophy. For now it is enough to note that Marcuse seems to accept, indeed, he presents this kind of broad characterisation of Hegel's philosophic system. Marcuse embraces the notion of the absolute – understood as the universal or Being – as a progressive, even radical, point of inquiry in Hegel's philosophy.

The absolute is the unity and totality of *Being* (*Sein*) which encompasses each individual being (*Seiende*) in relation to which each being can be determined as this determinateness, and which contains all positing and juxtaposition in itself. This

⁵ Once again it is not my concern as to whether Kant's position can be defended against these charges. Rather, in order to understand both Hegel's and Marcuse's position we need to understand that it arose, in part, as an attempt to overcome the perceived subjectivism of Kant.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

unity and totality of Being, which lies at the basis of the relativity of beings, is the absolute, free from any reference or relation to another besides itself. It is the ground and basis of each relation... it is that out of which they spring and to which they lead back.⁷

Furthermore, Marcuse makes much of the fact that Hegel has moved beyond Kant's epistemological-psychological categories of feeling, intuition and representation to the ontological categories of the *Logic*.⁸ Marcuse also agrees with Collingwood as to the relation of Hegel's categories to that of spirit.

... the concept is not "a faculty or property" of the I, something that I have ("just as I have a dress, color, and other external properties") but the being of the I itself... Thus "the concept is to be regarded not as an act of the self-conscious understanding, not as the subjective understanding, but as a concept in-and-for-itself which constitutes a stage of nature as well as Spirit."⁹

What then exactly is Marcuse's objection to Hegel's notion of the Absolute? For Marcuse accepts the possibility of presenting an account of the "unity and totality of Being" on the scale which Hegel was attempting. And he also accepts, with considerable enthusiasm, what he sees as Hegel's radical insights into the limitations of traditional ontology, (i.e., the perpetuation of a bifurcated world). As such Marcuse accepts the necessity and possibility of overcoming alienation in the world. Marcuse also accepts Hegel's insistence that the absolute is none other than Being as motility, i.e., the unifying structure of the world is a process. And furthermore, as motility, the absolute can only be understood, and embraced, through the dialectical and hermeneutical categories of the kind Hegel suggests. Marcuse as such fully accepts Hegel's methodology as the most appropriate way of conducting philosophy. However, what Marcuse does *not* accept is Hegel's final characterisation of the Absolute as a cognitive, all-knowing substance.

This point is to recognise that Hegel was not the first philosopher to introduce the notion of the absolute. The absolute, particularly in German philosophy, belongs to a long tradition in ontology of referring to the "ultimate, unconditioned, self-contained reality". It stretches back at least to Nicholas of Cusa (1440) and was refashioned by all the leading German

⁷ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.12.

⁸ It has been noted throughout that Marcuse reads Hegel's *Logic*, in part, as a continual discourse with Kant, especially Kant's notion of "transcendental apperception". However, in relation to the above point see, *ibid.*, p.119.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.118f. The quotation is Hegel.

idealists from Kant through Fichte to Schelling and Hegel.¹⁰ I have maintained throughout, that it is in regards to this aspect of traditional metaphysics that Hegel's work – and Heidegger's – is connected and continues the "tradition" as fundamental ontology, rather than a completely separate discipline. Consequently, Marcuse's understanding of Life needs to be understood not only within the tradition of articulating the character of Being, but that Being needs to be understood as continuing the articulation of the absolute, which in turn is an articulation of God. This is so regardless of how radically different these articulations are, and regardless of what ever rhetorical exhortations specific philosophers announce that their work is a break from this tradition.

It is, then, the Absolute as a cognitive, all-knowing substance that is the point of ambivalence that Marcuse finds in the *Logic*. This is because the characterisation of the absolute as a cognitive substance stands in opposition to what Marcuse believes are the more dominant themes in the *Logic*. For Marcuse these themes lead up to an understanding of the absolute in terms of Life, characterised by historicity.

...we must insist on the double meaning of the Absolute Idea, which on the one hand simply means the universal mode of being and, on the other, the highest and truest form of being. Such definitions of the Absolute Idea as "universal Idea," "universal modality," "infinite form," "logical idea," belong in the first category, while those like "truth which knows itself," "all of truth," "personality," "atom-like subjectivity," "imperishable life," come under the second... We can say that in general in the *Logic* Hegel aims at the first line of interpretation, while in his later *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* and the *Encyclopedia* the second becomes more dominant.¹¹

Marcuse, then, is not rejecting the notion of the Absolute (understood synonymously as Being), but rejecting Hegel's final presentation of the Absolute. As such Marcuse argues that the collective conceptual structure of Being, what Hegel terms the Absolute, the Category, or the Idea needs to be understood not as a cognitive substance but as Life. Once again it is worth turning to Benhabib to begin an explanation of what this may involve.

In the *Logic* Life is treated as the first form of the "Idea," which has not yet reached truth and freedom. Only conceptual thought can realize this highest meaning of being as equality-with-self-in-otherness. Only in the communion of the Absolute Idea with itself, of thought thinking itself, can the true form of the latter be

¹⁰ For a useful summary of the history of this tradition see M.Inwood, op.cit., p.27.

¹¹ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.183.

attained. By treating Life as an inferior form of the Absolute Idea, in the final sections of his *Logic* Hegel displays the ambivalence characteristic of his entire ontology. Although he has oriented his entire definition of Being toward the phenomenon of Life, he also argues that only cognition and conceptual thought actualize the highest meaning of unifying unity. But as the investigation of Hegel's *Early Theological Writings* and the *Phenomenology of Spirit* shows, Life is that form of being that can only sustain itself by initiating difference, by externalizing itself, and by reabsorbing such difference and externality once more into its unity. *Activity* is thus central to the mode of being of Life, and it is on account of such activity that Life always unfolds in a "world."¹²

We can now begin to see in Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel the lines of "the intrinsic relation between historicity and Spirit, temporality and Life". Marcuse fundamentally accepts Hegel's account of Being in the *Logic*. Specifically, he accepts that something like Hegel's presentation of organically developing categories constitute the presuppositions of all beings. Most importantly he accepts that what distinguishes and radicalises Hegel's thought from traditional ontology is the presentation of these categories as dynamic categories. Consequently, whilst these categories are presupposed by all beings they are not to be understood as having an external, abstract or an other-worldly character. Once again;

The absolute is not something "beyond" being. On the contrary, as the origin of being it allows it to spring forth out of itself and as the "original identity" it first gives all that is a unity over and against opposites while remaining present in all the multiplicity of being as this unity.¹³

What Marcuse rejects then, is both the characterisation of the absolute along the lines of a cognitive substance, and the presentation of this cognitive substance along ethical lines, i.e., the highest and truest form of being. This is not because Marcuse wishes to strip ontology of its ethical status (in the manner of the physical sciences), but because he wishes to preserve this status for the absolute characterised in terms of Life. As such, Marcuse accepts that objective forms of spirit, (in all its manifestations; law, aesthetics, art, religion etc) presupposes these collective categories if they are to remain organically alive. Marcuse also accepts, that like all forms of being, spirit is historically contingent. Significantly, it is also to claim that Marcuse asserts that spirit presupposes (i.e., appears out of) the Absolute Idea. However, the Absolute Idea has been refashioned and characterised as Life. And for Marcuse

¹² S.Benhbab, *ibid*, p.xxiii.

¹³ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.12 and p.23.

Life itself is characterised by historicity, i.e., Life is characterised consistently and radically in the manner that Marcuse claims the categories of the *Logic* are directed from their beginning.

5.3 *Aufheben: The Role of Reason in the Concept of Life.*

To suggest that Marcuse wishes to refashion Hegel's understanding of the absolute (Being) from the Absolute Idea characterised by cognition, to that of Life characterised by historicity, in no way is to reject the self-relating aspect of Life. This reflexive process referred to here is Hegel's notion of *Aufheben* or sublation; the process where the past is re-collected in a manner that lifts up and preserves certain aspects, whilst annulling or suspending other aspects. For if Marcuse was to characterise the absolute in terms that were devoid of this self relating process it would immediately reduce our understanding of historicity to an eternal form of change, of the kind that Hegel described as "bad infinity."¹⁴ Without being characterised by sublation any account of Being as an open-ended form of motility would be reduced to a theory of change stripped of meaning; it would reduce the motility of Being to a simple matter of fact, or more precisely, a fact of matter.

But more than this, Marcuse accepts that sublation is itself the root of motility. In order to appreciate the significance of this it will be beneficial to return to Marcuse's claim that our experience of all essents is fundamentally ruptured, that all being is characterised as an encounter with the other, i.e., as absolute difference. For Marcuse, motility is continually generated in the historical world as a consequence of forms of consciousness encountering the world and its constituents as absolute difference. As we have seen this is not a causal relation but a correlation; motility and absolute difference occur coincidentally.

Only because all being is fundamentally ruptured and split can it and must it develop as the ever new re-enacting and sublating of this dualism. As the "relatedness" of being-there to in-itselfness, as a mode of self-relating to what it is at any point, being must necessarily and recurrently "sublate" its being-there-ness in order to be at all.¹⁵

Significantly, Marcuse distinguishes the fact that "being is fundamentally ruptured and split", from the notion of alienation as it arises from the bifurcation of the world. For Marcuse the overcoming of alienation is not only possible but remains the central imperative directing philosophy and practice. Alienation, however, is distinct from absolute difference, and any attempt to overcome absolute difference in the realm of spirit can only ever lead to the creation of authoritarian social structures that deny freedom. Once again, I must postpone a

¹⁴ See above discussion of 'infinity' in the section entitled 'Doctrine of Being' (section 4.3).

detailed discussion of this issue until Chapter Seven. However, it is important for us to hold onto Marcuse's claim that overcoming of alienation does not involve the realisation of some kind of identity theory; it does not involve the realisation of some kind political utopia devoid of conflict.

Rather, truth can mean only that unity which always conceals difference throughout its movement, and which overcomes it only in order to regenerate it...The essential nature of truth for Hegel is its *motility*: "Truth is not what is merely at rest and simply there; truth moves itself, what is alive; it is eternal differentiation and subsequent reduction to unity."¹⁶

Consequently, as Pippin points out, Marcuse in presenting his reworking of Hegel's notion of Life (as an account of Being that overcomes alienation) is not, in fact can not, propose some kind of "identity theory" as his solution to alienation in the world. Identity theory is understood here in terms articulated by Pippin as the "... (apparently) ineliminable affirmative moment in [Hegel's] theory wherein he claims that history is intelligible only as the continuing, progressively more successful attempt to reconcile subject and object in Absolute Knowledge."¹⁷ Indeed, Marcuse is quite clear on this point:

Hegel's programmatic claim in the introduction to the *Logic* that the activity of thinking and being, the individual thought and its content (*Sache*), concept and the thing-in-itself (*Ding-an-sich*), are thoroughly identical has been particularly misleading in this respect and has covered up the original meaning of the entire *Logic*...¹⁸

The overcoming of alienation, in Marcuse's reading of Hegel, is not achieved through the subsumption or assimilation of difference in a manner in which difference is in effect extinguished. Rather, Marcuse asserts Hegel's original project of differentiated unity; a unity which always conceals difference within itself, as opposed to annihilating difference. And it is difference understood as the other, and the recognition of one's self in the other, that is the core of Hegel's principle of subjectivity.

In the previous chapter we saw how Marcuse interpreted the notion of differentiated unity in the light of the concept of essence, culminating in the category of actuality. And it is in relation to the category of actuality that Marcuse interprets the final book of the *Logic*.

¹⁵ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.112.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.146.

¹⁷ R. Pippin, 'Marcuse on Hegel and Historicity', op.cit., p.73. This is often seen to be a Romantic hangover in Hegel's work.

Marcuse begins by drawing our attention to the fact that the *Logic* is divided into two parts not three. The Doctrines of Being and Essence make up the first part, which is the objective part, reaching its apogee in the presentation of "actuality as the fulfilment of being". Whilst the Doctrine of the Concept makes up the second, and subjective part. Marcuse argues that there are no substantially new categories developed in the transition from the 'Objective Logic' to the 'Subjective Logic'.

There is no transition from "actuality" to a more actual structure: the Subjective Logic means first a "repetition" of the exposition of "actuality" in light of the *proper meaning* of actual being, and second, the exposition of that form of being which corresponds to this meaning of actuality. The Subjective Logic is thoroughly concerned with the meaning of "actuality" and with the most "actual" mode of being, for it will be shown that *all* modes of being are possible only on the ground of "actuality" and as various modes of actual being, the Subjective Logic is concerned with the "universal" mode of being in general.¹⁹

In this regard there are two things that need to be kept in mind. First, that Hegel's presentation of the concept of Life, as the first moment of the Idea, is a presentation within the Subjective Logic. And that the Subjective Logic is concerned to present an account of self-relation.

The Doctrines of Being and Essence, as well as the Doctrine of the Concept, will be developed on the basis of the knowledge that Being is motility and that motility is self-relation. Hegel's entire ontology presents nothing more than the concrete unfolding of the fundamental mode of Being as self-relation throughout the various spheres of being.²⁰

Second, the Subjective Logic is concerned directly with Being; it is concerned directly with the "universal" mode of being in general. This is to reiterate the point made above, that the Doctrine of the Concept is the final development of a structure that constitutes the presuppositions of all forms of being. The Doctrine of the Concept contains Hegel's final presentation of the category that is now seen to have been present in all previous categories. The Doctrine of the Concept contains nothing less than Hegel's presentation of God.

As such, any refashioning of Hegel's understanding of the absolute, if it is to avoid doing complete violence to Hegel's work, must include and account of self-relation, i.e., *reason*. In

¹⁸ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.187.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.89.

²⁰ Ibid., p.107.

reworking Hegel's notion of Life, a notion that is thoroughly infused with the idea of self-relation, Marcuse is not abandoning reason *per se*. Rather he is abandoning the presentation of "thought thinking itself" as the highest and truest form of being. But even more particularly he is abandoning the notion of Absolute Knowledge as universality. In place of the Idea as Absolute Knowing, Marcuse wishes to stress the foundational role of Life. In so doing Marcuse brings to the forefront the category of actuality understood as a continual process of activity or becoming. The driving force of this process remains that of self-relation, of mediation, i.e., the process of comprehending rather than annihilating absolute difference. Most importantly this whole process is historical, in the sense of necessarily occurring within a "world" in a manner characterised by historicity. It is then the concept of Life, as specifically presented in Hegel's *Logic*, which will now be addressed.

5.4 Life

As is well understood, in Hegel's system Life constitutes the first category of the Idea. The Idea itself constitutes the final dialectical movement of the *Logic*, and culminates in the presentation of the Absolute Idea as the cognitive substance that is presupposed by all beings. It is presupposed both in the sense that all diversity is directed towards the final becoming of the Absolute Idea, and also in the sense that all essents fall within the categories that constitute the Absolute Idea as a holistic structure. To claim that Marcuse seeks to refashion the notion of the absolute into the concept of Life is not to claim that he simply wishes to terminate the dialectical progression of the *Logic* with Life. It is not to suggest that he simply wishes to dispense with the final two categories of the *Logic* (Cognition and Absolute Idea). Rather, it is to argue that Marcuse thinks that the final two categories themselves presuppose Life in a foundational way. By this it is meant that they presuppose Life not in the manner of subsuming Life in the typical dialectical progression of the *Logic*, but rather as presupposing Life as the already "absolute universality of beings". For Marcuse "cognition" does not dialectically emerge within Hegel's system as a consequence of Life's (the previous moment) inadequacy as the ground of existence. Rather, from "...the start cognition operates within the unity created by Life and world, subjectivity and objectivity."²¹ For Marcuse cognition is a mode of Life not vice-versa. It is from this perspective that Marcuse asks the question of: "How can cognition be viewed as a special form of the Idea, as an independent mode of being of the concept, if cognition itself is only a [i.e. one -MC] possible behaviour of the living organism?"²² For Marcuse what is at stake here is nothing less than the possibility of the creation of diverse life-forms. Indeed, Benhabib suggests that for Marcuse "...when

²¹ Ibid., p.163.

²² Ibid., p.164. My italics.

cognition is defined as an aspect of Life, then historicity follows, when Life is defined as an inadequate form of cognition, history is repressed."²³

Marcuse claims that Life functions both as the absolute universality of beings, and that such a universality is characterised within "the unity created by Life and world, subjectivity and objectivity." But how can this be? For surely if Life is the unity of the world, subjectivity and objectivity, then it cannot at the same time be one of the elements to be unified. For the only way Life could be both unity and an element of what is unified would be if Life assimilated difference in the very manner Marcuse opposes? However, to think in these terms about the universality of beings may well be regression to the characterisation of Being as a thing rather than motility. For, as has been argued above, Hegel's system is not a static hierarchical ordering of categories but a dynamic unfolding of categories. As such Hegel's claim to have accounted for the unity of beings, without reference to external categories in the manner of what has been referred to as realism, only makes sense within the notion of an organically self-reflective system. Before we can even begin to access the plausibility of Marcuse's re-working of Life it will be of benefit to briefly restate the hermeneutical character of Hegel's philosophy.

In attempting to overcome the problems of a detached subject located within a given world of objects, i.e., in attempting to overcome the dualism of traditional ontology, Hegel claims that the unity of the world can only come into being through a hermeneutical process, i.e., the principle of subjectivity. Hegel of course did not refer to his system as hermeneutical but there seems to be good reasons for understanding it as such. Specifically, the relation between the Idea, Nature and spirit is not a process of once off causality, but rather a process of re-interpretation, re-presenting, and re-becoming of the world and its entities. As such, it is a process that alters the meaning, and the ontological status of all the relations involved. Michael Inwood points out, this involves a process where the "...logical idea conditions nature, which in turn conditions Spirit, which then conditions the logical idea; the world is a circle of successively sublated conditions."²⁴ The mind twister involved in this explanation is that Hegel also argues that the logical idea "...is the exposition of God, as he is in his eternal being *prior* to the creation of nature and of finite spirit."²⁵ Prima facie Hegel seems to want to have it both ways; on one hand claiming that God comes into being in the world, and on the other hand that God has an existence distinct from the world (something more akin to a dynamic presentation of Plato's forms). In order to unlock this contradiction it was suggested above that Hegel's "exposition of God, as he is in his eternal being prior to the creation of nature and of finite spirit" is a *logical* exposition. It is an exposition of what is presupposed

²³ S. Benhabib, *ibid.*, p.xxiv.

²⁴ M.Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*, op. cit., p.124.

by any entity. Building upon Kant's inquiry into what are the necessary transcendental conditions that are presupposed in order for a subject to experience the world as we do, Hegel inquires into what existence itself presupposes. As such, Marcuse reads Hegel as inquiring into the transcendental conditions of historical existence. It is as a logical inquiry (so understood) that this inquiry can be articulated distinctly from nature and spirit whilst at the same time can only be realised or manifested through nature and spirit. Whatever external forms nature and spirit take, such forms presuppose the categories of the *Logic*. God, comprehended as the logical structure of existence, is the *essence* of nature and spirit, but not identical with either nature or spirit. The *Logic* is an attempt to present this essence in isolation from its embodiment whilst at the same time insisting upon the necessity of God's embodiment.

With the above in mind I will now continue Marcuse's presentation. In chapter fifteen of *HO* Marcuse both begins his reinterpretation of Hegel's understanding of Life, and details the ambivalence of Hegel's position. Marcuse begins this chapter by drawing attention to the fact that in many passages of the *Logic* Hegel himself thinks of Life as universality. Marcuse wishes to bring these passages to the forefront of Hegel's thought and develop them as an alternative to the cognitive substance of reality. By characterising the Idea of Life as universality Marcuse wishes to re-emphasise "the original basis" of Hegel's ontology; a basis that itself will be characterised as historicity. For our purposes it is not necessary to enter into the intricacies of Marcuse's argument; only its lines and conclusions will be presented.

Marcuse's presentation of Life as universality is unambiguous. He formally distinguishes Life into the following outline.

1. "Absolute universality" that is omnipresent in all that is and runs through all beings.
2. The unifying unity of the existing manifold of being, as "the omnipresence of the simple in the manifold externality of space and time."
3. "The permanent and immanent substance of beings," which are only "objectivity" and "presupposition" of Life.

²⁵ Hegel quoted by H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit, p.185.

4. Life as this unifying unity of subjectivity and objectivity as a "subjective substance," as for-itselfness that is individuated and self-comprehending.²⁶

As with all formal definitions without detail this account of universality of Life tends to be somewhat empty. However, before turning to that detail it is important to be aware of Marcuse's point in presenting this formal account of Life. First, Marcuse wishes to stress that Hegel himself presents the Idea of Life as universality. Whilst Marcuse claims there are only fragments of this presentation remaining in the *Logic* it is explicit in Hegel's earlier works. Marcuse is not simply imposing this reading on Hegel. Second, whilst the Idea of Life is distinct from the Idea of Cognition and the Absolute Idea, it remains a "subjective substance" that is "individuated and self-comprehending." As such, the Idea of Life as universality is explicitly contrasted, and distinguished from any understanding of life as a biological, chemical or mechanical process. It is this second point that is presently of concern to us.

In Marcuse's preliminary re-interpretation of Hegel's concept of Life he broadly follows the moments or aspects that constitute the Idea of Life in the *Logic*. Specifically, Marcuse examines the concept of Life as a "Living Individual," "The Life Process" and "The Species". There are two important consequences that emerge from Marcuse's analysis (both consequences are examined in detail in the chapters that relate to the second part of Marcuse's text). First, Marcuse presents the Living Individual as an exemplar of the Life Process. In so doing Marcuse is concerned to present the Life Process itself as universal (presupposed by all beings). For Marcuse the totality of Living Individuals, as an organic whole animated by the Life Process, is understood to be Life, i.e., Life is the absolute presented as a living whole. Second, whilst Life as a living whole comes into being through the individualisation of diverse life-forms (Living Individuals) it is understood as the work of diverse species not primarily as the work of atomistic members that constitute such species. The work of individual persons can only ever occur, and take on meaning, as social work.

For Marcuse, the existential significance of the life process as universality is that in opposition to the mechanistic, chemical, or biological accounts of the world (accounts that inaugurate the spectre of nihilism), the concept of Life infuses the world with meaning. Life, as such, is viewed as a self-relating substance. It is a consequence of the relationship between Life, as a self-relating substance, and the external world that the external world is animated, and transformed from dead and meaningless objects into objects of interest, i.e., into a *world*. In a passage that brings to mind Heidegger's distinction between the world as "present-to-hand"

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.155.

and that of the world as "ready-to-hand" Marcuse summarises the character of the life process in the following manner.²⁷

This is a process of infusing with Life the external world that opposes Life. Worldly objects are made to "correspond" thereby to Life (habitability, enjoyability, usefulness, applicability are not simply present as aspects of Life but are posited with Life itself and find completion in its movement). The object is overwhelmed to the point where the living individual "deprives it of its particular nature (*Beschaffenheit*), converts it into a means for itself, gives it its own subjectivity as its substance". This final point is crucial: the world seized on by Life becomes Life; Life becomes the "truth" and "power" of this world. The seizure of the world is "its transformation into living individuality". Insofar and as long as the living form is alive, its world is a world that is alive and lived-in; it never is simply an indifferent object, an alien objectivity...This animation of the world is only possible because the world is already "implicitly" Life itself, for it is a presupposition of Life, against which Life acts, and it belongs to the Being of Life. "The organic nature which is dominated by the living one, suffers this only because it is in essence the same as what Life is for-itself". For Life is its "substance" and its "truth".²⁸

Marcuse thinks that it is precisely because Life, as a self-relating substance, has animated and unified the world, prior to any knowledge of that world, that the cognitive subject has something that can function as an object of knowledge. In opposition to the unity that Kant's transcendental subject applies to the manifold of experienced phenomena, Marcuse asserts a prior unity (i.e., prior to the transcendental subject) imposed by Life.

For the unity which Kant arrives at through the transcendental constitution of appearances in consciousness is not authentic, insofar as it represents only the absolutization of one of the two "parts", namely, subjectivity. "Out of fear of the object", critical philosophy "gave logical determinations essentially a subjective meaning: they thus remained dependent upon the very objects which they sought to flee from, and there remained a thing-in-itself, an infinite impetus, as a permanent beyond."²⁹

²⁷ Heidegger presents his account of how we encounter things in the world in Section 15 of *Being and Time*.

²⁸ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.159.

²⁹ Ibid., p.190.

However, in opposition to any kind of realist position that asserts that this unity is given once and for all to the world in the form of some prior (i.e., prior to matter becoming a *world*) and separate truth, Marcuse reasserts Hegel's dialectical becoming of Life within the world itself. For Marcuse the cognising subject is juxtaposed not against an immediate external world, but against a mediated world, i.e., against the concept itself. "What is juxtaposed to cognition, the object, no longer has the "external" form of an implicit objectivity. As something cognised it has the form of the concept."³⁰ This is to repeat Marcuse's assertion that "the Idea of Life is the ontological condition and the presupposition of cognitive activity"; knowledge emerges from Life not vice-versa.

The unity of I and world, or the prior bonding between the subject who cognizes and beings, does not merely result from knowledge; nor is it grounded in the accidental constitution of human knowledge and experience. This is rather an ontological relation, one that holds among beings themselves, one that is true of the "thing-in-itself". This bond precedes all knowledge and in fact makes factual knowledge possible.³¹

The significance of this is crucial in terms of what Marcuse finds to be ambivalent in Hegel's work. For it is not the cognitive substance that functions as universality, it is not Absolute knowledge that is to be understood as the unity that unifies all beings. But rather, it is the Idea of Life, it is Life as concept, Life as the category, Life as the absolute, which functions as such. In fact, knowledge must in itself be finite to the extent that it is knowledge of a prefound world. Marcuse makes this final point with a quotation from Hegel. "Cognition is *finite*, because it presupposes a *prefound* world; therefore its identity with this is not *for-itself*. The truth to which it can arrive, therefore can only be finite."³²

The final point that needs to be made in regards to Marcuse's preliminary presentation of Life is *how* the external world of matter *comes alive*, for the species, in the life process. Once again it is emphasised that this brief explanation is intended only as an introduction to Marcuse's detailed analysis in the following chapters. As indicated above, Marcuse follows Hegel in his presentation of Life as the totality of Living Individuals. As such Living Individuals embody the life process, and it is through Living Individuals that the inorganic external world is animated. However, most significantly for our purposes, whilst this process takes place through the activity of particular individuals it is a process that Marcuse insists is only properly understood as the work of a species.

³⁰ Ibid., p.164.

³¹ Ibid., p.162.

³² Hegel quoted by H.Marcuse, *ibid.*, p.168.

Let me attempt to interpret this becoming of Life as species more closely. The world has been "assimilated" into the life process, and has "come alive." It exists as Life, "as objectivity that is identical with Life". The world for the plant is *its* world, and likewise for animals and humans. But this assimilation and bringing to life of the world, which always takes place within a life process, is in truth the work of the species and not the individual. In the final analysis the individual lives in the world of its species. This is so even if the world can occur only through the activity of the individual, even if Life, as the "negative unity" of a comprehending for-itselfness, means necessarily individuation. The individual is "implicitly" the species, and the species is the true "individuality of Life itself". Seen from this perspective the individual proves to be one "that is mediated and produced", that stands in a certain point in the history of its species and which first "emerges" from it.³³

Marcuse's account of Life as the work of species marks the transition from the rather abstract content of the first part of his text to the second, more political part. It is a transition into the realm of spirit and ethics. It is a transition which connects the work of species to the "background" which is always present in any encounter with the world. How we are to comprehend the notion of "background" as a necessary conceptual structure of experiencing the world will be the topic of chapter six. However, whilst Marcuse himself proclaims this transition to be one that seeks to move beyond Hegel's attempt to distinguish purely "logical Life" from the "natural and spiritual", it is an account that continues to focus upon Life as a universal ontological category. Furthermore, it is an account of Life that continues what Marcuse claims was one of Hegel's original intentions:

"...to demonstrate that the good, as purpose, goal, and what ought to be is contained in the Being of beings, and this is no other than the process of eternally recurring and eternally self-dirempting (*urteilend*) fulfilment of what beings ought to be."³⁴

However, as Marcuse also points out this "good" is not to be confused with any notion of morality, with "moral idle talk". Certainly, Marcuse has no hesitation in declaring as bad any socio-political structure that restricts "the process of eternally recurring and eternally self-dirempting (*urteilend*) fulfilment of what beings ought to be." But such structures are not deemed to be morally bad or sinful in the Christian sense. There is not the slightest hint that offenders shall be held accountable, in another world, on Judgement Day. Rather, such structures are bad because they perpetuate a state of alienation or meaninglessness; they are

³³ Ibid., p.160f.

³⁴ Ibid., p.170.

nihilistic in their denial of Life. With this we have returned to where this chapter began: an explicit statement as to the inseparable relation of ontology and ethics.

Part Three

Chapter Six: Life as a Hermeneutical Articulation?

Before moving onto the interpretation of part two of *HO* I would like to give some guidance as to how I intend to present Marcuse's own interpretation of Hegel's early writings. This will take the form of expanding upon the observations in Chapter Two concerning Marcuse's intellectual debt to Heidegger and linking it to Hegel's 'principle of subjectivity'. My intention here is to further develop how Marcuse presents the correlation between subjectivity and Life, consciousness and Being, in a way that does not collapse into the now familiar and problematic positions of subjective idealism (especially relativism) or univocal realism. Hopefully, this will provide the basis for comprehending, in the following chapter, Marcuse's account of the essential role that intersubjectivity plays in our comprehension of reality. For it is argued that the continued unfolding of the 'we-like' character of Life is what fundamentally distinguishes Marcuse's position from any form of bourgeois individualism. This chapter, as such, will function both as a gathering up of what has gone before, and also as a transition into the second part of Marcuse's text, *The Ontological Concept of Life in Its Historicity as the Original Foundation of Hegelian Ontology*.

What may be termed 'German philosophy of the spirit' (and the discourse surrounding it) often seems to be characterised not only by impenetrable abstractions, but also at times unbelievable claims. Yet, if we are to entertain, even for one moment, the possibility that these claims are indeed plausible, how could this be otherwise? For one of the claims being made in different forms by different thinkers (primarily in this thesis, Hegel, Heidegger, and Marcuse) is that a pervasive censorship has been effected by the dominant form of ontology – and the world views that arise from this ontology. If this is indeed fact, then to recognise this form of censorship is to recognise the extent to which diverse worlds have been destroyed, or are in the process of being destroyed. It is to recognise that this process of censorship is imposed by a homogenisation of truth, and the consequent destruction of supposedly untruthful diverse worlds. It is to recognise that if this possibility is indeed fact, then this process of "normalisation" has also permeated and infected the constitution of *all* our selves. It has "...colonised the common sense of our civilisation"¹ to the extent that not only are existing (non-capitalist, non-Western) diverse social structures trivialised, but possible future social

¹ C. Taylor, 'Engaged agency and background in Heidegger', in Guignon, C., *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, p.319.

structures are aborted at their conception. Consequently, this has led, particularly in the popular realm, to the almost total exclusion of raising questions of spirituality and freedom as serious concerns. At least questions concerning the specific kind of spirituality and freedom that is associated with aspects of continental philosophy. For these are the concerns of a different world to that of the prevailing ontological perspective – the instrumentality of disengaged agency has no need for, or interest in, these kinds of ethical life-forms. This process of ontological censorship, the inability of certain questions to be even raised let alone comprehended and actualised into social practices, is the very political and social consequence which Marcuse persistently warned against. It is a concern that is at the core of Marcuse's notion of *one-dimensional being*, which will be examined in section 8.2.

If indeed this form of world censorship is the case, i.e., the destruction of diverse ways of being, it raises a number of interpretative problems. For clearly the German philosophers considered in this thesis claim to be of another perspective. Which is to say they need themselves to be understood as belonging to another world. But how then are we to interpret the philosophy of thinkers who inhabit distinct worlds? How are we to interpret their philosophy when our own constitution is oriented towards denying the existence of such worlds at any serious level? How are we to interpret these worlds from a cultural background that insists that such thought is no more than earlier inept attempts to discover the real truths, which subsequently have been unlocked by our own sciences?

In this chapter I will expand and present some possibilities to overcoming these kinds of interpretative problems. In so doing, I seek only to raise these issues to the forefront of discussion, not to solve them. This will be done in a manner that will link up with how the second part of Marcuse's text may be interpreted, and how Marcuse himself interprets Hegel's *PhG*. This chapter will contain five sections. In the first section I will discuss Charles Taylor's notion of the "articulation of engaged agency and background". In this discussion I hope to present a way in which we may further our understanding of Marcuse's interpretation of Life as an ontological concept. Part of this discussion will involve establishing the distinction between *Verstand* and *Vernunft*. The second section will continue this discussion, but will place more emphasis on what Hegel's notion of *Vernunft* -reason - entails and how it informs Marcuse's interpretation of Life. The remaining three sections will serve to introduce Marcuse's reading of Hegel's *Jena Logic* and *Early Theological Writings*. The intention of these sections is to establish the background from which Marcuse reads the *PhG*. This will primarily involve coming to some understanding of how Marcuse comprehends "nature", and what distinguishes nature from Life. I will argue that Marcuse is most fruitfully understood as presenting a thoroughly hermeneutical account of reality.

In order to initiate the following discussion it will be useful to remind ourselves of a point that may seem obvious. There are two main streams to Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel. One of these streams is critical and the other positive. By critical I am not referring primarily to the critique that Marcuse brings to bear upon Hegel's work, although this is clearly important, but rather aspects of the critique that Hegel's work directs to social, political and philosophical matters, aspects which Marcuse wishes to preserve in his own work. The other main stream is the mirror image of this critical dimension. It is the positive aspect contained in both these thinkers work. By positive I mean an account of an alternative way of ethical life, a qualitatively different ethical life to that which is criticised. Consequently, a large part of the critical impact of Marcuse's work (and others) is to be found in the presentation of a positive alternative. Importantly, for Marcuse this alternative can never simply be a theoretical alternative - it must always be one of practical involvements that arise from the possibilities of the present social reality. To this extent I have already indicated the importance Marcuse places upon the process of actualisation through the concept of *Wirklichkeit*. Chapter Seven will detail this process through Marcuse's analysis of Hegel's Lordship / Bondship dialectic. Here we need only observe that the actualisation of thought through "doing" is an essential aspect of historicity.²

However, neither the critical nor the positive stream of this tradition can be understood without reference to the other. Furthermore, to observe the dual nature of this form of philosophy is also to observe a specific strategic presentation of philosophy. In broad terms this is to observe a *dialectical* presentation of philosophy where thought, in moving beyond the common sense of the understanding (*Verstand*), is presented first as *negative reason*, and then as *speculative reason* (*Vernunft*). But more than this, both Hegel and Marcuse's dialectical presentation of philosophy is also a presentation of the *dialectic*. Hegel's dialectic is to be understood as both a method of philosophising and the subject-matter of philosophy. For Hegel the dialectic is both the correct method of philosophy, and also an account of the ground of all entities - the dialectic is an account of Being as motility.

Dialectic, on Hegel's view, accounts for all movement and change, both in the world and in our thought about it. It also explains why things, as well as our thoughts, systematically cohere with each other.³

² Marcuse's notion of *Wirklichkeit* finds expression in revolutionary politics with his associated notion of the "radical act". The connection between Marcuse's notion of the radical act and historicity is observed and summarised in A. Schmidt 'Existential Ontology and Historical Materialism in the Work of Herbert Marcuse', in *Marcuse: Critical Theory and the Promise of Utopia*, op.cit., p.52f.

³ M.Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*, op.cit., p.83.

Even with these streams in mind (the characterisation of both philosophy and reality as negation and speculation, the critical and the positive) it is almost inevitable that sight will be lost of the radical possibilities of this kind of discourse; it will seem unbelievable. That is, unless we approach such alternative accounts of reality with a degree of openness. For the interpretation of the radical *other* requires not only the application of 'imaginative expression', to use Collingwood's term, but an act of intellectual generosity. It requires the serious recognition of the other. By expanding on the dual character of Hegel's dialectic in reference to Marcuse's interpretation of Life, I hope to raise the importance of extending this kind of hermeneutical generosity. I shall begin by examining Charles Taylor's presentation of the notions "engaged agency, background and articulation", especially as they appear in Heidegger's work.⁴

6.1 *Engaged Agency, Background and Articulation*

In previous chapters it was argued that at the core of Marcuse's Heideggerian reading of Hegel was the challenge to our familiar view of the world. We saw how Marcuse argued that Hegel identifies this familiar view with the bifurcation of the world. Marcuse describes this familiar view as presupposing that the world and its objects are ready-made, and separated from the empty form of thought. It has also been argued throughout that Hegel asserts that this kind of ontology ultimately collapses into one of two fundamental forms; subjective idealism, or various forms of realism including the perspective of the physical sciences. In Hegel's view both forms must be resisted if freedom is to be realised. I have previously suggested that much of Marcuse's critique involves both locating and asserting a form of thinking within Hegel's work, which has become more closely associated with Heidegger's notion of being-in-the-world. As such Marcuse's presentation of Hegel's ontology parallels Heidegger's programme of destruction, what he calls the "phenomenological hermeneutic of facticity".⁵ For our purposes we need only note that this programme of destruction is aimed at any position that asserts a variant of the doctrine of reality. More particularly it is aimed at what Taylor refers to as the notion of disengaged agency. At the root of Taylor's notion of disengaged agency is what he terms the "ontologising of rational procedure". By this Taylor means, "...what were seen as the proper procedures of rational thought were read into the very constitution of the mind and made part of its very structure."⁶ It is in opposition to this kind of conception of an ahistorical subject that Taylor thinks Heidegger's major contribution to philosophy is located.

⁴ C. Taylor, 'Engaged agency and background in Heidegger', in Guignon, C., *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, pp.317-336.

Taylor's terms "engaged" and "disengaged agents" are of interest because they neatly encapsulate the kind of Heideggerian alternative that Marcuse seeks to develop in his re-interpretation of Hegel. I have argued that Marcuse interprets Hegel's work as the recovery of a form of ontology where the subject is understood to be an historical subject, a subject engaged and embedded in a particular culture of specific meaning. Indeed, in describing Hegel's philosophy as founded upon the 'principle of subjectivity', the subject referred to is always, and only, an historical subject. In this manner Taylor suggests engaged agency " ... is that agency whose experience is made intelligible only by being placed in the context of the kind of agency it is."⁷ What's more, the subject is seen to be in somehow responsibly linked to their particular world, which ultimately is the very reason why such worlds carry a meaningful dimension. An "...engaged form of agency is one whose world is shaped by its mode of being [i.e. its specific mode of subjectivity]. This mode of being provides the context in which the experience of this agent is intelligible, that is, has the sense it makes to the agent, as well as being understandable to an observer."⁸ Taylor refers to all of this as our shared "background".

In overcoming the dominance of disengaged agency Taylor identifies at least two important strategic processes that enable us to grasp the notion of shared "background". The first process Taylor refers to as the "deconstruction" of the assumed neutrality and objectivity of disengaged agency. The second strategic process is the presentation of a positive alternative to disengaged agency - the presentation of the subject as engaged or involved in a particular background. Taylor presents this involvement as a form of articulation. These processes broadly correspond to what I referred to above as the critical and positive dimensions of Marcuse's application of dialectical method.

6.1.1 Critical Thought as Deconstruction

Taylor suggests the process of "deconstruction" originates in modern philosophy with Kant. It involves moving beyond the assumed neutrality of the disengaged perspective by identifying that any perspective what so ever presupposes a particular conceptual and culture background. This process, which Taylor also associates with the legacy of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, takes the form of arguing:

⁵ T. Schwarz Wentzer, *Heidegger's Early Hegelianism*, op.cit., esp. section 3.

⁶ C. Taylor, 'Engaged agency and background in Heidegger', op.cit., p.317f.

⁷ Ibid., p.325.

⁸ Ibid., p.328.

that things are disclosed first as a part of a world, that is, as the correlates of concerned involvement, and within a totality of such involvements...The aim is to show that grasping things as neutral objects is one of our possibilities only against the background of a way of being in the world in which things are disclosed as ready-to-hand. Grasping things neutrally requires modifying our stance to them that primitively has to be one of involvement. Heidegger, like Kant, is arguing that the comportment to things described in the disengaged view requires for its intelligibility to be situated within an enframing and continuing stance to the world that is antithetical to it, hence that this comportment could not be original and fundamental. The very condition of its possibility forbids us giving this neutralizing stance the paradigmatic and basic place in our lives that the disengaged picture supposes.⁹

When Taylor argues that disengaged agency is not entitled to its "neutralising stance", or "the paradigmatic and basic place [it has] in our lives," he is not denying that this is the immediate position we assume in the modern world. Indeed, in part, Heidegger's existential analytic can be seen as an attempt to reveal that our immediate or so-called 'natural' response to the world is a conditioned response. What we take to be our immediate or natural response to the world (and what we take to be the world) presupposes a specific conceptual or cultural background. And in the modern European world this 'natural' response is that of disengaged agency. But more than this, as Taylor indicates above, disengaged agency is itself an abstraction from a particular cultural background. It is if you like a second stage perspective, but one that is still dependent upon particular forms of involvement, i.e., it is in no way neutrally objective. As quoted above, "...Grasping things neutrally requires modifying our stance to them that primitively has to be one of involvement." We have seen how Hegel also argued against this kind of abstraction in relation to certain presentations of universal categories. Indeed, the contextualising of forms of reason as conditioned responses to the world is at the core of Hegel's rejection of the "... unshakeable distinction drawn by ordinary consciousness between the content of knowledge and its form, or between truth and certainty."¹⁰ And of course Marcuse's original project of 'concrete philosophy' is a continuation of the this tradition of breaking down socio-political abstractions. To this extent, it was argued in Chapters Three and Four that Hegel's insistence upon the necessary embodiment of distinct forms of thought was interpreted by Marcuse to mean that the constituents of a particular world, the essents that show themselves, stand in direct correlation

⁹ Ibid., p.332 and p.333.

¹⁰ Hegel quoted by H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p189.

with particular forms of reason, or what Heidegger refers to as involvement. In order to shed more light upon the character of disengaged agency as a form of abstraction it is worth introducing Hegel's concept of *Verstand*.

Paradoxically, even though we may argue that the perspective of disengaged agency is an abstraction from a particular cultural background, Hegel thinks something like disengaged agency is the immediate response to the world in the modern era. Hegel refers to this response as the *understanding* of both common sense and the physical sciences - i.e., *Verstand*. In *Reason and Revolution* Marcuse describes *Verstand* along the following lines:

The operations of the understanding [*Verstand- MC*] yield the usual type of thinking that prevails in everyday life as well as in science. The world is taken as a multitude of determinate things, each of which is demarcated from the other. Each thing is a distinct delimited entity related as such to otherwise delimited entities. The concepts that are developed from these beginnings, and the judgments composed of these concepts, denote and deal with isolated things and the fixed relations between such things. The individual determinations exclude one another as if they were atoms or monads. The one is not the other and can never become the other. To be sure, things change, and so do their properties, but when they do so one property or determination disappears and another takes its place [e.g. night to day, youth to maturity]. An entity that is isolated and delimited in this way Hegel calls "finite".¹¹

Whilst Marcuse accepts that the operations of the understanding are an important aspect of establishing certain forms of knowledge, and that they have yielded significant results especially in the realm of the physical sciences, such ways of thinking remain abstractions. The mode of being associated with *Verstand* is an abstraction, precisely because it continually attempts to break down the constellation of relations that constitute the conceptual background from which it arises, rather than revealing what these relations involve, and what possibilities may emerge from them. In Marcuse's view such abstractions create and perpetuate processes of reification, and detract from the possibility of a 'concrete philosophy'.¹²

Part of this argument is that abstracted perspectives, such as that of disengaged agency, deny their subjective and historical dimensions. Certainly, such abstracted thought may well contribute to the establishment of various forms of knowledge. However, Marcuse is insistent

¹¹H.Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, Humanities Press, New Jersey, 1995, p.43f.

that this way of thinking is simply one conditioned response to the world amongst others - there are no grounds for claiming any kind of epistemological or ethical privilege based on being more objective (true) than another perspective. In fact the perspective of disengaged subjectivity perpetuates what Marcuse refers to as the "objectification" of the world. I will return to the significance of Marcuse's account of objectification, which we can loosely associate with reification, in the following chapter. The point being made here is that Marcuse insists that the claims of neutrality made by different advocates of disengaged agency are infused with subjectivity to the same extent as any other perspective. Furthermore, in pursuing the kind of questions it does the perspective of disengaged agency (like all perspectives) gives up as many possibilities as the material benefits it yields. To use Heideggerian terms, every "unconcealment" conceals. What's more the possibilities that it gives up are often the very modes of being which are enacted and actualised in different worlds by different peoples from different backgrounds. In the following chapter it will be argued that disengaged agency gives up the possibility of actualising a mode of being that Hegel refers to as freedom.

Epistemological issues, then, are not the only ones that are at stake in charging the operations of *Verstand* with perpetuating certain abstractions. Such criticism involves more than a dispute as to whether or not the thought associated with disengaged agency accurately reveals the character of the world. Rather, in drawing attention to the lost opportunities or the ethical limitations that disengaged agency entails, Marcuse is drawing attention to the ontological consequences of disengaged agency. For if the arguments of those who stress the significance of background horizons in the constitution of our worlds are correct, then the operations of *Verstand* also function as a particular background. This is so despite the fact that such operations are themselves an abstraction from and a denial of their background horizons. Whilst Marcuse accepts the Heideggerian argument that the operations of the understanding - disengaged agency - "could not be original and fundamental", Marcuse recognises such thinking as itself being a form of reason. And as a form of reason the operations of the understanding enable the actualisation of a real ontical world. Indeed, the thinking of disengaged agency forms the background in which a real world is shaped as a multitude of determinate and isolated things with their fixed relations. It is a background whose form of involvement is dis-involvement, dis-location, de-linking - in short alienation. Marcuse is quite clear as to the ontological as opposed to epistemological consequences of *Verstand*.

¹² For a good account of Marcuse's critique of the 'neutrality' of the natural sciences, see A. Feenberg, 'The Bias of Technology', op.cit., esp. pp. 244ff.

The form of reality that is immediately given is, then, no final reality. The system of isolated things in opposition, produced by the operations of the understanding must be recognized for what it is; a "bad" form of reality, a reality of limitation and bondage.¹³

This "bad" form of reality is ontological precisely in the sense that I have been presenting, i.e., alienated life-forms unified by this kind of thought only enable things, and correlations between things, to appear or show themselves in a certain way. As an ethical form of life the reality of disengaged agency is "bad" to the extent that it frustrates the endeavours of spiritual life by objectifying or reifying the background relations that distinguish and enable the very possibilities of diverse ethical forms. Disengaged agency denies the world-shaping creative possibilities associated with spiritual life by insisting that its own reality is a final reality. But how do we know, as reified and disengaged agents ourselves, that this is the case? Taylor suggests that part of the answer to this question involves the social articulation of our own background through something like Heidegger's 'phenomenological hermeneutic of facticity'.

For Taylor, an articulation of background is directed towards achieving the unmasking of the assumed neutrality of the disengaged agent. The disengaged agent's perceived neutrality is revealed to be itself a particular comportment to the world characterised by something like *Verstand*. The articulation of background is then intended to demonstrate that we cannot be-in-the-world without being engaged in some kind of cultural background that in turn gives our particular world its particular shape and colour. However, this articulation is a complex matter. For as Taylor makes clear the establishment of background as a necessary aspect of experience is often re-directed in an attempt to represent a univocal reality that exists beyond cultural backgrounds in an ahistorical and fixed manner. But background is not something to be articulated in order to be bracketed, as a preliminary necessity to understanding reality as objective, value neutral, and eternally true. Rather, it is to assert that we can only experience the world through a background of unconscious behavioural patterns, constellations of presuppositions, opaque social practices, etc, that function as our particular historicity. Our background, our past, directs our present actions in a way that enables the "disclosure" of specific aspects of Life. As such, it is to deny that there is a pre-given world that we can come to know, once and for all, as it is *in-itself*. At least, it is to deny the possibility of a transparent representation of the world as statically existing things which are interpreted by the mind through static categories.

¹³ H. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, pp.45f.

This is not because of any epistemological limitations. Nor is it to reassert the Kantian distinction between phenomena and unknowable things-in-themselves. Certainly, it is a reformulation of the necessity of Kant's transcendental synthesis in accounting for human experience, but it goes beyond Kant (see section 3.3). Like Kant's transcendental ego the notion of background involves the assertion that because our knowledge of anything is only possible through the conceptual and cultural medium of a particular background, no-thing can ever be known outside of some form of background. However, to the extent that our cultural backgrounds are alive, i.e. they are in a continual process of transformation (which Kant's transcendental ego is *not*), then what *is* encountered is also in a process of transformation. But more than this, Marcuse will also argue that what is known (Life and nature) are also subjects in the process of transformation (see section 6.3-6.5). This does not mean that we can know nothing of *reality*. It simply means that we need to grasp reality as characterised by motility in the manner described in Part Two. We need to grasp reality along the lines of Hegel's principle of subjectivity or what Marcuse also refers to as "self identification in other being". It is because reality is a dialectical process, which involves the transformation of both the consciousness and the object, that we can never know either the subject or the object as some kind of thing-in-itself. In reference to this point Marcuse states;

This is true insofar as the structure of the "self identification in other being" determines both the nature of the consciousness and the object being and addresses both types of being as the same type of movement.¹⁴

For Marcuse, to grasp this is to move from Kant to Hegel. The assertion of background is not to do with presenting a correspondence of truth in the manner of the doctrine of reality because the subject (mind) and the world are not fixed things. They are continually changing with the dynamics of the background through which they are interpreted, and in so doing negate and transform the background itself. Consequently, the Heideggerian intention of this kind of discourse is concerned with demonstrating the impossibility of the existence of a value free, or objectively neutral, representational form of truth.

This background sense of reality is nonrepresentational, because it is something we possess in – that is inseparable from – our actual dealings with things. This is the point that is sometimes made by saying that it is a kind of "knowing how" rather than "knowing that". The latter kind of knowledge is understood as consisting in

¹⁴ H.Marcuse, 'On the Problem of the Dialectic', in *Telos*, Number 27 (Spring 1976), p.27.

having correct representations. We cannot do justice to our ordinary ability to get around if we construe it on the model of mind over against a world that it mirrors.¹⁵

But if our world can not be represented as it is in-itself, how then do we achieve "know how"? How then can we develop a comprehension of the world and ourselves? Taylor suggests that far from preventing the development of knowledge, engaged agency points precisely towards its creation. And it is in relation to this that Taylor introduces his account of *articulation*.

6.1.2 Ethical Life as Articulation

By articulation Taylor obviously does not mean a process that has as its end some form of explicit, rather than confused representation of reality. Rather, he is referring to a process, which can never be complete, but nonetheless shapes and reveals diverse subjects as what they are –i.e., diverse. Taylor describes this process, and why it can never be completed, in the following terms:

But why can't it all be articulated? Because it is not a matter of representations, but of real context conferring sense. As a real context conferring sense, our form of life is also essential background to any articulation being meaningful. The short answer to why complete articulacy is a chimera is that any articulation itself needs background to succeed. Each fresh articulation draws its intelligibility in turn from a background sense, abstracted of which it would fail of meaning. Each new articulation helps to redefine us, and hence can open up new avenues of potential articulation. The process is by its very nature uncompletable, since there is no limit on the facets or aspects of our form of life that one can try to describe or of the standpoints from which one might attempt to describe it.¹⁶

I would like to suggest that Taylor's account of this process of continual articulation offers a way of comprehending Marcuse's interpretation of Life. Specifically, Taylor presents this process of continual articulation as a hermeneutical process which can be linked up with Marcuse's presentation of Hegel's ontology. Indeed, in another paper, where Taylor directly confronts the question of what hermeneutics involves, he identifies hermeneutics precisely as this process of articulation of background, the articulation of our shared pre-

¹⁵C. Taylor, 'Engaged agency and background in Heidegger', in Guignon, C., *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, p.327.

understandings.¹⁷ The hermeneutical dimension of articulation is, as noted above, that "... each new articulation helps to redefine us, and hence can open up new avenues of potential articulation." This seems to be precisely the point Marcuse has been making in reference to the historicity of beings - each new articulation is only possible on the basis that we have re-collected our past in a specific way. It is the stretching of our past into the present that enables us to "open up new avenues of potential articulation".

For Taylor this process involves the continual re-interpretation of our ontic worlds and ourselves (i.e., a continual hermeneutic of facticity). However, it will be argued that Marcuse wants to extend this process beyond the methodology of the human sciences and the formation of historical subjects to encompass the ontological structure of reality (which Taylor seems reluctant to do).¹⁸ Marcuse wishes to extend something like Taylor's notion of articulation from the way we understand the constitution of the self (engaged agency), and the Ontical-Existentiell world (the entire constellation of background practices that unifies a world as a world) to an account of Being. It will be argued that Marcuse wishes to extend something like the notion of articulation, which in effect is Hegel's dialectic, to that of a fundamental ontology. In doing so Marcuse moves from the dialectic as a method of philosophy, and a description socio-political life, to articulation as an account of reality itself. Reality is comprehended as a kind motility associated with processes of articulation or dialectics. Reality is to be identified with the character or form of Being as motility. Articulation is identified with the ground of all entities - Life.

6.2 *Life, Reason and Dialectics.*

To associate Hegel's dialectic, understood as a form of articulation, with the structure of reality is not uncommon in Hegelian discourse. Nor is it uncommon to point out that Hegel thought that the unity of this form of articulation to be the continual becoming of reason. Indeed, Hegel thought the structure of reality to be the continual articulation of reason through the exposition of spirit. We are also aware, however, that Hegel's presentation of reality is generally considered to be unacceptable for a variety of reasons, not the least being

¹⁶ Ibid., p.328. For a full presentation of how Taylor's notion of articulation shapes the self see, C.Taylor, *Sources Of The Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989.

¹⁷ C.Taylor, 'Understanding in Human Science', in *Review of Metaphysics*, 34 (September 1980), p.25-38.

¹⁸ Whilst it was not evident in the above discussion Taylor thinks it at least philosophically beneficial to preserve the distinction between the natural sciences and the human sciences. That is he does not wish to claim that the natural sciences are just another form of hermeneutics in the manner of Rorty. I shall argue below that the collapsing of this distinction and all that it involves is precisely where Marcuse's position leads us. For a detailed account of this aspect of Taylor's work see Rorty's response to Taylor, *ibid.*

its authoritarian tendencies - i.e., its perceived destruction of diverse ways of being that value non-rational forms of unity. This kind of criticism is exemplified in the work of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Marcuse's re-interpretation of Hegel's concept of Life as a dialectical account of reality is intended to rescue Hegel's philosophy from some of these charges. Marcuse not only thinks that Hegel's dialectic should be grasped in terms of the original problem of the dialectic within the metaphysics of antiquity, but that it substantially solves this problem (see section 3.1). Hegel's dialectic succeeds in presenting an account of unity (the Being of being) that enables multiplicity.¹⁹

But what, then, is the relationship between Life and Reason in Marcuse's re-presentation? In the previous chapter I indicated the broad lines by which Marcuse sought to distinguish Life and Reason. In the following short section I shall try to clarify these lines in regard to Taylor's notion of engaged agency and the articulation of background, i.e., Heidegger's notion of a hermeneutic of facticity. I shall begin by once more stressing the nature of Hegel's dialectic as a form of articulation that characterises the structure of reality. That is, in addition to the characterisation of the dialectic as a method of philosophy or an account of certain modes of being the dialectic will be presented as fundamental ontology. Having made this point I will examine Marcuse's reading of Hegel's concept of *Vernunft* and its relationship to Life.

The claim that I am making in this section is that Marcuse's interpretation Hegel's ontology, as a form of motility, is in effect a hermeneutical articulation. What then does this mean? In answering this question it will be helpful to turn to Hans Gadamer, who also draws attention to this Heideggerian theme in his own study of Hegel's dialectic. In the following passage Gadamer gives us a sense of both the subjective aspect of reality in terms of the continual expression of new forms of reality, whilst also insisting that the determinations of these expressions have an independence and logic of their own. What emerges from this relationship is something rather like a conversation (articulation), which also has a life (i.e., logic or structure) of its own beyond the necessary utterances of the speakers. The coherence of individual statements is always determined as much by the shape of the conversation as by what is spoken.

Plainly, the concepts of exposition and expression, which properly define the essence of the dialectic, the *reality* of the speculative, must, like Spinoza's *exprimere*, be understood as referring to an ontological process. "Exposition," "expression," being stated, demarcate a conceptual field behind which lies the

¹⁹ H.Marcuse, 'On the Problem of the Dialectic', in *Telos*, Number 27 (Spring 1976), p.33.

grand tradition of Neoplatonism. "Expression" is not a matter of subjective choice, i.e., something added on after the fact and by virtue of which the meaning in the private sphere is made communicable. Rather it is the coming into existence of spirit itself, its "exposition." The Neoplatonic origin of these concepts is not accidental. The determinations in which thought moves are, as Hegel emphasises, not extrinsic forms which we apply as is expedient to something given. Rather, they always have already taken us up into themselves and our thought consists in following their movement.²⁰

If we are to move beyond the bad reality associated with the operations of the understanding we must allow ourselves to be taken up into the articulation of our involved dealings in the world. In order to comprehend and be meaningfully engaged in the various articulations of life we must follow and participate in the movement of specific articulations or forms of involvement. We must open ourselves to the collective exposition and expression that constitutes the determinate movement of any individual articulation. This does not mean that we simply repeat, rote style, the particular movements of any individual articulation. Rather, it points to the fact that if any articulation is alive then it must be continually refreshed by new interpretations, by new moves, by new technology etc. But more than this it can only be continually refreshed in a way that somehow lifts its past interpretations, moves, technology etc., into the present. Furthermore, if individual articulations are to continue to live then they must be directed towards the future in a way that can only ever make sense in terms of their past. This of course is the historicity of any articulation. And if we open ourselves to the dialectical movement of specific articulations - a movement that is objectively beyond ourselves but which nonetheless is created by the collective endeavours of all participating subjects - then we are authentically conforming to the general structure of reality (reality being the totality of articulations). The notion of authenticity is used here to mean something clearly like Heidegger's "resoluteness" - an openness of being. What this form of authentic being entails for Marcuse will be addressed in Chapter Eight. Here we need only note that its claimed authenticity derives from its supposed re-enactment of the general structure of reality as characterised in terms of both the dialectic and historicity.

Surely, however, if the dialectic is able to recollect its past in the manner that the theory of historicity attributes to it then Hegel must be claiming that the dialectic is a subject? And if Hegel is attributing the unity of reality to a subject then surely he is asserting the kind of subjective idealism he has rejected all along? (See section 5.2). A further examination of the role of reason in Hegel's dialectic will be useful.

²⁰ H.Gadamer, *Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies*, op.cit., p.33.

Hegel claimed that the fundamental character of reality is nothing less than reason. Inwood provides a succinct statement of Hegel's dialectical presentation of reality as reason.

The processes and ontological hierarchies of nature and spirit are... governed by an immanent understanding and reason that is analogous, in its development, to the understanding and reason of the human mind. Genuine rationality consists in the submission and conformity of *our* reason to the reason inherent in things: In cognition we should follow the immanent dialectic of concepts, objects and processes.²¹

In contemporary philosophy to speak of reality in terms of immanent reason is likely to incite violence. But such hostility may be inappropriate in regard to Marcuse's reading of Hegel. Such criticism may be inappropriate, if it ultimately stems from the charge that Hegel universalises a particular form of reason at the expense of all other diversity. That is if Hegel asserts a form of reason that is dependent on either a particular historical subject (a particular culture) or on an external subject (other-worldly). Certainly, there is strong evidence that ultimately Hegel did characterise a particular manifestation of reason as the universal ground of existents. In fact, in the previous chapter I presented the beginnings of Marcuse's interpretation of Life, as it appeared in the *Logic*. Whilst one of the characteristics that Marcuse stressed was Life's self-comprehending character (reason), Marcuse objected to Hegel's presentation of the Absolute (Being) primarily as a cognitive substance. As such Marcuse shares, on this point, an objection to Hegel's universalising a particular mode of reason. But Marcuse also urges us not to lose sight of the fact that Hegel's concept of reason is distinct from what is often associated with reason, i.e., for Hegel reason is distinct from the operations of the understanding - *Vernunft* is not *Verstand*. It we are to grasp Marcuse's reworking of the concept of Life as a form of unity that allows for the continual appearance of new things by submitting, conforming and transforming our own reason to that inherent in the multitude of possible articulations, then it is important to appreciate what the distinction between *Verstand* and *Vernunft* involves. If we are to grasp Marcuse's claim that the appearance of new things and new worlds is dependent upon a process of continual re-contextualisation - i.e., openness or resoluteness - whereby things are re-interpreted in a way that gives rise to a new totality (or at least an interpretation of a new totality), then we must move beyond a conception of reality as isolated entities with fixed properties.

Marcuse tells us, that for Hegel the distinction between *Verstand* and *Vernunft* is the same as that between common sense and speculative thinking, between undialectical reflection and

²¹ M.Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*, op. cit., p.244.

dialectical knowledge. It is in opposition to the common sense or disengaged view of the world that Marcuse presents the outlines of Hegel's conception of reason or *Vernunft*.

As distinguished from the understanding, reason is motivated by the need to "restore the totality". How can this be done? First, says Hegel, by undermining the false security that the perceptions and manipulations of the understanding provide. The common sense view is one of "indifference" and "security", "the indifference of security". Satisfaction with the given state of reality and acceptance of its fixed and stable relations make men indifferent to the as yet unrealised potentialities that are not "given" with the same certainty and stability as the objects of sense. Common sense mistakes the accidental appearance of things for their essence, and persists in believing that there is an immediate identity of essence and existence.

The identity of essence and existence, *per contra*, can only result from the enduring effort of reason to create it. It comes about only through a conscious putting into action of knowledge, the primary condition for which is the abandonment of common sense and mere understanding for "speculative thinking"... Speculative thinking compares the apparent or given form of things to the potentialities of those same things, and in so doing distinguishes their essence from their accidental state of existence.²²

Reason as *Vernunft* is, then, Hegel's account of the restoration of totality. To the extent that any totality or world exists it must be unified by a constellation of background practices. That is, in order to encounter a world as a world we do so through specific cultural and conceptual structures that Hegel identifies as various modes of reason. Reason *qua* reason is the general name that Hegel gives these various modes. In his later works Hegel will also describe the unity of reality itself as Reason, i.e., Hegel will describe the unity that enables or grounds the actualisation of individual modes of reason (ethical substances) as Reason. However, in both *HO* and *Reason and Revolution*, Marcuse stresses the various other ways in which Hegel attempted to account for the general structure of reality, i.e., the various other ways in which Hegel attempted to "restore the totality".²³ In this Thesis I have been examining the possibilities that Marcuse thinks emerge when one of Hegel's earlier attempts to restore totality, i.e., Life, is raised to the forefront of Hegel's thought. However, I have also argued that Marcuse's presentation of Life does not exclude reason as a form of negation, re-

²² H. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, op.cit., p.45f.

²³ For a summary of the distinct stages that Marcuse attributes to Hegel's thought, and Hegel's distinct systems see H. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution*, op.cit., p.28f.

collection, self-comprehension, and speculation. Indeed, in the conclusion to *HO* Marcuse states that in order to make sense of Life as an account of reality, characterised by historicity, that historicity itself must be grasped as a process that embodies and is driven by reason. It is in this sense that Marcuse claimed that historicity was the foundation of Hegel's dialectic.

Historicity as a process is characterised by the "overcoming (*Aufhebung*) which goes beyond the transcendence of subjectivity and objectivity". Historical being occurs as the *unity of the I and world*, self(consciousness) and objectivity. The "external world" is only "a relation contained in Life itself"; its "reality consists only in this relation to Life. The world can exist as actuality only as the "externalisation" (a "manifestation") of Life. Historical Life is the universal medium through which all being is encountered as "actual" and through which it attains its "meaning and significance". History is a context "encompassing" both Nature and spirit.²⁴

As such, when Marcuse strips the Absolute of its all-knowing, all-comprehending character he is not stripping the Absolute of reason. Life as the absolute remains a self-comprehending (but not all-knowing) characterisation of Being. In effect once Reason is stripped of its teleological direction, once Reason is stripped of its character as a cognitive subject it becomes a predicate of Life. Life *is* reason directed towards no end, "...it is not at all a happening to and from. It is a pure happening in-itself ..." But it is a self-reflexive happening that carries its past forward in a way that its present and future determinations can be seen to have followed a logic or articulation independent of the determinations themselves - each new determination is part of a history as opposed to existing in isolation. Life as such is distinguished from the endless progress of disunited entities by its character of re-collecting its past (*Aufhebung*).

In this sense Life as a dialectical account of reality can be seen to function in a similar way to Taylor's notion of articulation. Negative reason reveals the presuppositions of dis-engaged agency in order for speculative reason to emerge and continue as a creative, or world-shaping, articulation. It is through speculative thinking embodied in the action of individuals that the world, and the subjectivity (in all its manifestations) changes. This is not to claim that speculative thinking must completely permeate a culture in order for change to occur; it is not to claim that a culture must be completely self-comprehending in order for change to occur. Nor it to claim the consequences of reason, embodied in action, are always what is intended by the individual participants (we often contribute to a conversation in a significant

²⁴ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.320f.

but unintended way.) But it is to claim that in order for change to come about speculative thinking or positive reason needs to be present. Historic change is none other than the realisation of speculative possibilities.

However, there is another sense to which Life characterised by reason refers, and that is as an account of reality itself. Furthermore, the historicity of Life only makes sense once Life is comprehended as a subject. It is because Life is comprehended as a subject that Marcuse can claim that it is directed without "plan" in a manner similar to Kant's "purposiveness without purpose."²⁵ Significantly, the notion of direction entails historicity. It is in this second sense that Life as articulation goes beyond the characterisation of the particular, and the explanation of particular world-shaping activities. Life in this sense is to be grasped as an ontological concept that exists beyond those that think it, and enact it. This second sense, however, is not some attempt to arrive at a conception of pure Life or pure reality. For as we have seen in section 4.2 Hegel insists that the notion of a universal must always be embodied. Nonetheless, Life is not to be reduced to its particular manifestation, the universal is distinct from the particular, or as Marcuse expressed in the above quotation "...the 'external world' is only 'a relation contained in Life itself'; its 'reality consists only in this relation to Life.'" It is in this second sense, which Marcuse identifies with Life once it is stripped of its role of inaugurating Absolute Knowledge, that Life characterised by reason (and reason by historicity) is presented as the ground of all existents. Life, reason and the dialectic are all closely associated with the same process – i.e., Being as motility.

To claim that the general structure of reality has the form of a hermeneutical articulation seems to fly in the face of how we understand both the physical world and the social world - it seems quite unbelievable, which of course is why it is such a radical presentation. To facilitate our comprehension of this radical presentation I will now turn to the relationship between Life, nature and spirit as it appears in the Early Theological Writings.

6.3 Concept of Nature in Hegel's *Early Theological Writings* and *Jena Logic*

As we have seen the main thesis in *HO* is Marcuse's claim to have identified a crucial transformation of the concept of Life within Hegel's work. Within the *Logic*, this involved the transformation of Life from its original ontological role as the fundamental unity of beings, characterised by historicity, to its subsumption within the Absolute Idea. Within the *PhG*, a

²⁵ H. Marcuse, *Counter-Revolution and Revolt*, op.cit.p.66. Marcuse's reference here to Kant's "purposiveness without purpose" is in relation to nature. I will return to the relationship of nature and Life in the following section.

similar transformation takes the form of the subsumption of Life within Absolute Spirit. Marcuse's is claiming, of course, that both these transformations are part of the same process, they mark the development of Hegel's thought, a development that Marcuse thinks detracts from some of the most radical and insightful aspects of Hegel's philosophy. Marcuse argues that this transformation was neither a conceptual rupture nor was it ever complete. It is precisely because of its incompleteness, precisely because of the fragmented presence of its earlier form, that Hegel's mature work remains for Marcuse so ambivalent. Consequently, Marcuse is not claiming to have found the philosophic solution to the problem of Being in Hegel's work but more modestly indicating some promising lines of investigation in regards to this problem. Marcuse states:

My aim is much more to point to a crucial point of Hegelian philosophy, where its guiding ideas meet and where the original and guiding idea of Life is displaced by the later conceptions of knowledge or spirit. These guiding motifs are not isolated from and juxtaposed to each other but are brought into close struggle with each other and get intertwined, and this process is prevalent throughout the Hegelian ontology.²⁶

Marcuse argues that this process of transforming the original concept of Life began as early as what is known as Hegel's Jena System. It is not necessary to go into the detail of how and why this occurred during this period. We need only note Marcuse's observation that within the Jena System Hegel presents his concept of Life at the beginning of the Philosophy of Nature, in contrast to the *Logic* where Life is presented as a later stage of nature.²⁷ The significance of this observation is that within the Jena System the concept of Life still retains much of its original formulation as the grounding of all forms of being. Within the Jena System, the categories of Life, not the Absolute Idea, function as the logical structure of existence. It is Life that is presupposed by nature and subsequently historical being (spirit).

Life is a determination of the Being of nature in general, of its "proper essence," of its "material" which encompasses all the individual "systems" of nature. Indeed the concept of Life leads beyond the dimension of nature altogether: nature is only a specific *mode* of Life, "only formal life".²⁸

²⁶ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.226.

²⁷ In fact, as Marcuse indicates it was Heidegger who first drew attention to this point during his lectures on Hegel's *Phenomenology* in 1930-31, *ibid.*, p.200.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.220.

It is my contention that Marcuse's observation of the changing relationship between Life and nature within Hegel's philosophy is of crucial importance in comprehending the socio-political significance of *HO* - i.e., the contingency of spirit, freedom and authentic being. In claiming this I have no intention, nor is it necessary, to present a Marcusean philosophy of nature. However, social and political worlds do not arise out of nothing, and as we have seen one of the central tenets of Hegelian philosophy is that spirit arises out of nature - spirit is not responsible for the causation of nature. Furthermore, ideas of nature are never isolated from ethical life, and this creates an apparent dilemma. On the one horn of the dilemma Marcuse is claiming that nature can only ever be encountered as an historical entity, from within a specific world. Marcuse maintained this position throughout his career and makes a clear statement to its effect in *Counter-Revolution and Revolt*: "nature is an historical entity: man encounters nature as transformed by society, subjected to a specific rationality which became, to an ever-increasing extent, technological, instrumentalist rationality, bent to the requirements of capitalism."²⁹ Consequently, what are ordinarily considered to be representations of nature - wilderness, Romantic forests, bio-diverse eco-systems, dream-lands, resource deposits for exploitation, the total aggregate of natural things etc - are *all* reflections of distinct cultural worlds. However, on the other horn of the dilemma, the spiritual worlds, which colour our interpretations of nature, are claimed to have themselves arisen from nature - i.e., nature gives rise to the form of consciousness that gives specific meaning to nature! The following section will attempt to unlock this dilemma. In so doing I hope to continue to lay the ground work for understanding Marcuse's indictment of the physical sciences in the establishment of a 'one-dimensional' world. The first task then is to distinguish Marcuse's understanding of nature from that of the physical sciences.

A typical contemporary understanding of nature is to be found in the *Blackwell Companion to Metaphysics*. Nature is described as the "...sum total or aggregate of natural things. A natural thing is distinguished from an artificial thing, or artefact: the latter owes its existence to human ingenuity or artifice."³⁰ Already, in such a brief introduction we can identify all the static presuppositions of traditional ontology (a given and independent world separated from subjectivity). Throughout this chapter I have been arguing that such views misinterpret particular worlds, animated by a particular backgrounds, for a given or objective "sum total of natural things". We have also seen how through his concept of the "absolute difference within Being" Marcuse argues that in order to encounter any being whatsoever we do so only through a complex, and dynamic, shared background, but in a way that maintains difference. Our encounter with the other is not the only possible encounter. I have suggested that what

²⁹ H. Marcuse, *Counter-Revolution and Revolt*, op.cit., p.59.

³⁰ J. Kim and E. Sosa (eds.) *A Companion to Metaphysics*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1995, p.349.

this amounts to is a re-assertion of Heidegger's notion of worldliness, i.e., what ever we encounter is always encountered within a specific world. And for Marcuse, worldliness entails dynamic categories of hermeneutical involvement whereby all elements are in a state of transformation. To this extent Marcuse notion of the absolute difference within being not only asserts it is impossible to gain a knowledge of reality in any objective or value-free way, but it also denies the possibility of the identification between consciousness and object. Indeed, "...consciousness is only possible by opposition to 'another' being which is objective for it."³¹

None of this is to claim that nature is somehow causally dependent upon spirit or mind. Neither Marcuse standing in concert with Heidegger, nor Hegel, deny the independent (pre-world) presence of material objects. Quite the contrary, it is to claim that nature exists as an already unified being, from which spirit develops. This is precisely Marcuse's point in indicating that in the Jena system nature is grounded by Life not vice-versa. The concept of worldliness is not a theory of causation -nature maintains a certain independence from spirit. Drawing our attention to this point, in relation to Heidegger, Dostal states;

Dasein is ontologically defined as worldly... On the other hand, nature, or extantness, Heidegger tells us, does not belong ontologically to the world. Worldliness is not an ontological property of nature. Yet Dasein encounters nature only in the world. Accordingly, Heidegger calls nature (or the extant) as encountered in the world "intra-worldly". Yet to cite Heidegger once again: "Intra-worldliness does not belong to nature's Being" (BP 169) We are left to ask, If nature is encountered only as intra-worldly, yet intra-worldliness does not belong to nature's being, do we encounter nature itself?³²

Dostal continues this point a page later;

Clearly for Heidegger both the natural sciences and farming are aspects of culture; they have their place in the world and are historical. But nature is not "worldly" as we have seen. This is made clear when Heidegger asserts that, though there is no world without Dasein, there would be nature without Dasein: "Nature can also be when no Dasein exists". Nature, then, is not merely a projection of the natural

³¹ H. Marcuse, 'On The Problem Of The Dialectic', op.cit., p.28.

³² R. Dostal, 'Time and Phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger' in C. Guignon, *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, op.cit., p.162.

sciences or of our practical involvements with it. But it seems that our understanding of it, such as it is, comes from our practical involvements.³³

Are we then faced, as Dostal thinks, with a view that seems to suggest "...a parallel with the Kantian view that we cannot know things as they are in themselves, but only insofar as they appear to us"?³⁴ For Marcuse this cannot be, and he insists along with Hegel that we can come to know things, and in fact must come to know things if we are to move beyond the presuppositions of traditional logic. The question becomes for Marcuse what kind of knowledge we can have of nature. It is in the light of these concerns that we can appreciate why in the *ETW* Hegel interprets nature at its most fundamental level. Nature is interpreted as the *other*.

It is clear that in this exposition of the concept of Life, nature does not mean a "substance," ontologically distinct from human existence, like the *res extensa* which is juxtaposed to the *res cogitans*. Hegel defines the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity in a manner wholly different from that of two ontologically different substances... Nature is the *other* of Life which is "posited" ontologically by each living individual; it is the *other in opposition* to which individual life can first become. Nature is "all the rest" besides individual life. The concept includes the organic, inorganic, human and non-human worlds. It is the "infinite manifoldness" in which the "single" individual which is "subsistent for itself" lives. But this manifoldness is not simply dispersed into an "infinite manyness"; rather it is itself "unity." Indeed, insofar as it first *becomes* a unity through the positing of individual life, while uniting itself thereby with life, this unity is *unified* by and unified with human life.³⁵

In contrast to the physical sciences nature is grasped as a truly, and eternally, mysterious subject, which presents itself in an infinite number of forms to a plurality of cultural worlds. Rather like the Delphic oracle, nature reveals as many truths as the variety of questions that are directed towards it. Nature is to be grasped along the lines of Heidegger's notion of a "clearing", or a "field of relatedness", where entities become "illuminated". Marcuse maintains this view of nature throughout his career. In *CRR*, Marcuse argues that such a notion is ridiculed and rejected by the physical sciences and capitalist forces because such perspectives think of nature as untouched by thought, and as something that is complete and

³³ Ibid., p.163.

³⁴ Ibid., p.164.

ready for-itself. In contrast Marcuse argues that nature is itself a subject, and that it is humanity's alienation that "...prevents [them] from recognising nature as a subject in its own right - a subject with which to live in a common human universe."³⁶ Significantly, like all subjects (self, ethical communities, the world) nature is directed, but without "plan" and "intention". Rather, it is directed along Kant's notion of "purposiveness without purpose".³⁷ It is because nature is a subject of this kind that it plays its role in Hegel's principle of subjectivity, for the *other*, which enables the return of consciousness as self-consciousness, is always the other of subjectivity as well as objectivity. It is the subjectivity of the other - i.e., the continual development of the other - that creates the absolute difference within being and prevents any possible identification between self-consciousness and the other. As such the subjectivity of all specific spiritual worlds develop through the hermeneutical process of directing specific kinds of questions to the other grasped as nature and subject.³⁸ And it is this subject that we discover when we look behind the curtain of appearance and discover *ourselves*. Hegel's principle of subjectivity is as such fundamentally inter-subjective.

6.4 The Natur- and the Geistwissenschaften

Is Marcuse's work then to be associated with that of anti-foundationalists, such as Rorty and Derrida? And if so does this force Marcuse to accept the complete relativity of philosophical accounts of reality? For what is it that prevents Marcuse's position from collapsing back into yet another form of subjective idealism - accounting for the meaning of reality in terms of its dependence upon a cultural mind (the handiwork of humanity), which is now understood as pre-understanding or background?

It seems clear that Marcuse does collapse the distinction between the natural and human sciences, and along with it the distinction between nature and history. Quoting Dilthey, Marcuse explicitly states that in relation to the sciences, (i.e., both human and natural),

³⁵ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.215.

³⁶ H.Marcuse, *Counter-Revolution and Revolt*, op.cit., p.66.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.66.

³⁸ This process is very similar to what I take to be at the heart of Heidegger's notion of *disclosure*. To the extent that what is disclosed by human activity is creative of the new, i.e., is something more than a repetition of what is given by the 'tradition', then our ethical comportment is characterised as *authentic*. For a more detailed discussion of Heidegger's notion of disclosure along these lines see F.Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of Mitsein*, op.cit., p.38.

Hegel's philosophy entails that 'the *abstract* concept of humanity and the natural system of the human sciences were fully dissolved into the *historical process*.'" ³⁹ Marcuse goes to say;

It is well known that Dilthey, in the course of his investigation, was forced to overcome the original distinction between the natural and the human sciences. History no longer remained a process confined to one region of being alone, juxtaposed to nature as the other, but nature itself was drawn into the historical process of Life itself. Indeed, for Dilthey the final problem was "the unity of both worlds."⁴⁰

We can note, as a starting point, that at one level Marcuse's position is in agreement with Rorty, and others, in declaring that there is no interesting split between the *Natur-* and the *Geistwissenschaften*.⁴¹ There is no interesting split, because both perspectives, the natural and the human sciences, reflect a hermeneutical process – both perspectives reflect a similar process, which yields different results. For Marcuse mechanistic, chemical or biological explanations of reality become simply one kind of world-shaping ontology amongst others. The world of the physical sciences has the same Ontical-Existentiell form (although different content) as any other socio-political world, regardless of its dominance. As such, there is no claim to be made as to whether or not the natural sciences more truthfully, or accurately, or objectively reflect reality as a *thing-in-itself*. But rather each regional ontology and ethical life-form, potentially allows for its own unique diverse constellation of happenings. For sure, there will always be areas of overlap – a religiously orientated culture will no doubt articulate ways to exploit and even control the physical environment. But this does not mean that exploitation and control are its predominant orientations.⁴²

As Dostal remarked in the quotation above, it is through the practical involvements, which define various ethical life-forms, that we come to know nature as we do. And the practical involvements of the natural sciences are ones centred on prediction, control and exploitation of nature. Marcuse, then, is in agreement with Rorty in regard to the claim that the dominance of 'scientific' explanations of reality has much more to do with their pragmatic success than with knowledge of nature or reality as it objectively *is*.⁴³ The Ontical-Existentiell world of the

³⁹ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.320.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.322.

⁴¹ R. Rorty, in 'A Reply to Dreyfus and Taylor', in *Review of Metaphysics*, 34 (September 1980), p.39.

⁴² This would seem to be one of the most basic points concerning Hegel's notions of *Volkgeist*, *Zeitgeist* etc, i.e., we can characterise the predominant orientation of specific worlds without denying the presence of less dominant orientations.

⁴³ The assertion of nature's independence in the above way is not to identify nature with reality per se.

physical sciences is involved with the constitution or happening of a world oriented towards instrumental control of all its constituents. This form of constituting the world is indeed *real*, as humanity's increasing control of the physical world has demonstrated. The physical sciences have animated, actualised or realised the entities of the world in a specific way. Rorty sums up this position with the following statement:

To say (with "scientific realists") that because we have hit upon a method of predicting and controlling nature we have hit upon a way of describing nature in "absolute terms" – its *own* terms – is just paying ourselves a pointless epistemological compliment. Even if we dream up a sense in which vocabularies are more "absolute" than others without thereby repersonalizing Nature, we would have no reason for thinking that vocabularies suitable for prediction and control have *less* to do with human purposes than those suitable for providing hope and overcoming alienation.⁴⁴

In short the physical sciences are asking a specific set of questions, and obviously enough, they are getting a specific set of answers. Or to put it in Heideggerian terms, simply because the physical sciences are dis-closing or dis-covering (*entdecken*) certain aspects of 'nature', it does not give them sole rights to all scientific and ethical claims about 'truth' or objectivity.⁴⁵ From this point of view it is no coincidence that the world of the physical sciences should uncover and enable entities, including selves, to appear as potential things to be controlled and exploited. If the predominant questions being asked are those concerning exploitation and control, why should we be surprised by the fact that the 'world' is constituted by such things? For if our involvement with the world through our various social relations, practices, and institutions (our conceptual and cultural background) become predominantly geared towards issues of control and exploitation, then things will predominantly appear as potential essents to be controlled and exploited.

The social effect of this is that the dominant constitution of all previously considered subjects becomes that of thing-hood. This is so for nature as well as human subjectivity. Consequently, the self-sustaining hermeneutical transformation and of subjectivity collapses in it tracks. The multi-dimensional dialogue between a plurality of subjects is re-placed by a monologue directed by questions of control and exploitation. Eventually, this will lead Marcuse to the presentation of one of the central dilemmas of *One-dimensional Man*:

⁴⁴ R. Rorty, in 'A Reply to Dreyfus and Taylor', in *Review of Metaphysics*, 34 (September 1980), p.42.

... how can the administered individuals - who have made their mutilation into their own liberties and satisfactions and thus reproduce it on an enlarged scale - liberate themselves from themselves as well as from their masters? How is it even thinkable that the vicious circle be broken?⁴⁶

For Marcuse it is because subjectivity is dynamic, and not contained to any given facticity, that the bleak prospect of the regressive transformation of human subjectivity from freedom into slavery is possible. It is because Marcuse takes seriously the contingent character of subjectivity that at a certain point the self is capable of being reduced to an ethically dysfunctional object. At a certain point it is possible that human subjectivity will predominantly become nothing more than a thing to be controlled and exploited. Significantly, this is not just a claim about morality, but it is a claim about the ontological constitution of the self. It is not simply about being treated like a thing. It is not simply about restricting the freedom of individuals by restraining them from being who they are or can be. It is not simply about withholding certain political rights from those who are different. It is not simply about repression, despite the importance of this. But rather, it is about *becoming* a thing. It is about the despair of living in a closed world incapable of allowing diversity to happen. It is about the deep despair associated with the regressive transformation of the self into a thing incapable of bringing itself about in any other than a one-dimensional and meaningless way. It is about the realisation of a world devoid of spirit. Marcuse's comprehension of nature and Life -i.e. ontology - contain the origins of what Feenberg describes as Marcuse's most controversial thesis on technology: "science, by virtue of its own method and concepts, has projected a universe in which the domination of nature has remained linked to the domination of man."⁴⁷

Importantly - and this is the point that all those associated with genetic engineering, cloning, mood altering prozacs, and all the other tools of control and exploitation of the self and nature, continually fail to appreciate- it is about the fact that things could, and have been otherwise. This is not to suggest the laws that control the physical matter could have been otherwise. Nor is it a form of Humean scepticism that we can never really know that these laws will persist beyond their last observed manifestation. But rather, that our orientation towards the physical world, could be, and indeed has been, other than that of exploitation and control. The meaning of both nature and human subjectivity has in the past, and could be once more,

⁴⁵ The relationship between Heidegger's use of *entdecken* and his notion of openness (*Unverborgenheit*) is succinctly stated in F.Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of Mitsein*, op.cit., p.8, f.11.

⁴⁶ H.Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, op.cit., p.250f.

understood in terms as diverse as love, mystery or reverence.⁴⁸ Later in his career Marcuse will attempt to present the details of this form of intersubjectivity (i.e., between nature and humanity) in terms of "radical sensibility".⁴⁹

Marcuse's views concerning the subjectivity of nature and its intersubjective relationship with humanity mark a radical departure from anything he may be seen to share with Rorty and American pragmatism⁵⁰. Marcuse is committed to asserting that there is an interesting split between the kind of world view or ontology that recognises itself as hermeneutical, and the kind that does not. The kind that does recognise this fact is that which is informed by the principle of subjectivity. For Marcuse the split between the hermeneutical and non-hermeneutical is of serious concern because it opens up the possibility of breaking beyond ethical relativism. It does so by placing philosophy in a position where it can ask additional questions about the fundamental (hermeneutical) character of Being in way that is distinguished from univocal conceptions. Such questions take the form of: if all Ontical-Existentiell worlds are created by a complex constellation of social, political and cultural practices and facts, is there something even more fundamental that allows their specific happening?

6.5 *Belief in Life As Original Unity*

Marcuse is suggesting that Hegel presents us with an account of nature that has the general form of otherness, i.e., nature stands in opposition to the individual. Like all forms of opposition nature presupposes a unity. However, as an organically developing subject we cannot demonstrate nature's original unity in either mathematical or empirical terms.

⁴⁷ H. Marcuse quoted by A. Feenberg, 'The Bias of Technology', op.cit., p.239.

⁴⁸ R.G. Collingwood persuasively demonstrates this point in *The Idea of Nature*, op.cit. In this text Collingwood seeks to reveal how humanity's relationship with the physical world has changed throughout the course of history. Collingwood's main thesis is that even within the tradition of Western European culture, humanity's orientation towards nature, and consequently, nature's ontological status, has been radically diverse. Collingwood argues, that the idea of nature, which is to say the meaning of nature, and what is revealed of nature, is radically diverse. Like Marcuse, Collingwood asserts that our 'idea of nature' has been thoroughly determined by historical conditions. Despite this, however, the possibility for most "scientists" of interpreting nature from a position informed by the principle of subjectivity (as opposed, for example, exploitation and control) still seems an absurdity. Indeed, in his concluding remarks Collingwood suggests that an idea of nature informed by something like a hermeneutical perspective, a truly fundamental perspective, has not even commenced its appearance. Collingwood also remarks that if he knew what this appearance would entail he would himself have already embarked upon its realisation. See pp.174ff.

⁴⁹ One of the best accounts of "radical sensibility" and its relation to nature as subject is contained in H. Marcuse, *Counter-Revolution and Revolt*, op.cit., chapter 2.

⁵⁰ By American Pragmatism I am referring to a Rorty style presentation of Heidegger stripped of fundamental ontology, and bolstered with the further insights into 'know-how' of Wittgenstein, James and Dewey.

Nonetheless, for Marcuse all forms of conscious being presuppose its presence. Its presence is the other, which Hegel's principle of subjectivity relies. Marcuse states the importance of the other in the development of the self-consciousness in the following terms. "This is evident from the fact that Hegel considers "consciousness" by its essential nature to demand an opposing Being-for-consciousness! Consciousness is only possible by opposition to 'another' being which is objective for it".⁵¹ We would be mistaken, however, to conceive this as a form of Cartesian dualism. In presenting nature as subject in opposition to human subjectivity Marcuse is not claiming that nature is the dead matter of a mechanist world awaiting animation.

Thus nature is not an abstract and "dead multiplicity"; it is itself an infinite manifold of "organizations, individuals as unity", nature is a living "whole". Nature itself is a "bonding," a "synthesis." ...Life does not unify a dead manifold, lying before it and to which it is juxtaposed as an abstract unity. Rather this manifold exists only insofar as it is unified by Life and as an animated manifold, and the unity exists only as a process and hence as a living unity. What Hegel later presents as the achievement of the cognizing I and its original synthetic unifying activity shows itself at this point: here, however, it is presented as an achievement of Life.⁵²

Marcuse is claiming here, that to the extent that nature is, i.e., to the extent that nature is actual, then it must already be unified by an original synthesis, and Hegel calls this original synthesis Life. This is not simply a dogmatic assertion, but refers to the fact that the very problem of unification stems from the presence of opposites – this, as we have seen, is the issue of the second book of the *Logic*; the 'Doctrine of Essence'. It refers to the fact, as Hegel points out, that "... opposites can only be recognised as opposites through the fact that they have already been united." And as Marcuse adds, the existence of opposites "... presupposes a fundamental unity, lying at its ground, an original synthesis (!), which forms the criterion for 'all' comparisons and juxtapositions."⁵³ It is here that Marcuse draws our attention the fundamentally religious character of Life.

One can only "believe" in such an original unity; one can never demonstrate it, for "to prove would mean to exhibit the dependencies." Such a unity, however, is simply

⁵¹ H.Marcuse, 'On The Problem Of The Dialectic', op.cit., p.28.

⁵² H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.216.

⁵³ Both quotations from *ibid.*, p.209. Exclamation mark is Marcuse's.

"independent"; it is the one which all juxtaposing and sublating unity is dependent.

All opposing and relation of elements takes place "with reference to it".⁵⁴

Indeed, pure Life as the original unity that allows "...beings to spring forth from it, which sublates and carries all individuations and partial individuations within itself and lets them proceed forth..." is nothing less than the Divine. At this point it would seem that we are entitled to object that both Marcuse and Hegel have reverted to "bad" metaphysics or a religious view that should be kept separate at least from socio-political theory. However, we need to remember the fundamental criticism directed towards the "objective" character of the physical sciences, a body of knowledge that links its 'objectivity' and 'truthfulness' to its apparent ability to exhibit dependencies. For what is objected to in the physical sciences is not simply its authoritarian character, but that this authoritarian character emerges from the physical science's refusal to acknowledge that it is only one world-shaping perspective amongst many - i.e., the physical sciences are hermeneutically constituted to the same degree as any other world view. Indeed, the objective foundation of the physical sciences, after more than three hundred years, still remains no more than a promissory note against some future discovery. Certainly, physics, chemistry and biology are continually dis-covering ways to control and exploit things, but they are no closer to revealing some kind of original truth than any other form of metaphysics. Once the physical sciences are stripped of their fallacious and monopolistic claim of "objectivity", then they are also stripped of much of their authority. Which is to say that the physical sciences are themselves founded upon something more akin to faith than "objectivity". And when the physical sciences lose their authority Hegel's ontology becomes believable.

Original unity then, which is now named Life, is to be *believed* not proved. Life in-itself is God, and (for Marcuse and Hegel) God is the object of religion, philosophy and art. However, to suggest that Life in-itself is God, and consequently a matter of faith, is not to suggest that we can know nothing of Life (as unity) and as such know nothing of God. Hegel is not Kant. For Hegel the very fact that questions concerning unity arise for a particular individual, sets that individual on the path to discovering God. In examining Marcuse's presentation of Hegel's concept of Life we are in fact retracing the path of such questions primarily from the perspective of Hegel's answers. In so doing we have seen how Marcuse accepts Hegel's argument that individual subjects emerge out of and in opposition to nature. We have continually anticipated how in the process of interrogating nature both the individual subject and nature, now comprehended respectively as spirit and the world, are involved in a continuous hermeneutical circle of transformation. Furthermore, once this hermeneutical

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.209.

process gets started – and in some sense it is active from the very beginnings of sense-certainty – then any awareness of the presupposition of the original unity of nature has already been left behind. The original unity of nature is forgotten as the different manifestations or stages of spirit become pre-occupied with their own world-shaping work – i.e., culture formation.

Marcuse seems to be suggesting that Hegel's principle of subjectivity needs to be synthesised with Heidegger's hermeneutic of facticity. This is because each stage of spirit mistakes the unity of its own world for nature's original unity, in a way that requires its destruction in order to progress. Each stage mistakes the answers to the questions it has asked of nature, for nature's original unity, it mistakes the answers it finds in nature for God. Such answers, which I have associated with the notion of articulation or background, subsequently become part of the *other* that each fresh generation must engage if it is to be authentic. Past social articulations become the historical *facticity* that will undergo a hermeneutical destruction. Marcuse in effect is re-introducing, and attempting to historicise, some of the central components of Heidegger's thought (as it appeared in *Being and Time*). Marcuse makes special use of Heidegger's notion of 'falling' and 'inauthenticity'.

All action presupposes a reality "alien" to the doer which must be interacted with and transformed, in order for self-consciousness to exhibit and fulfil itself. But this reality is in fact no other than "the work of self-consciousness"; in this reality it is concerned only with itself and its own affair (*Sache*). In order to be able to act, however, self-consciousness *must misconstrue* (*verkennen*) this ultimate truth. It must assume that the world is an "alien reality which is immediately given," and "which has a proper being in which it [self-consciousness] cannot recognise itself" (PhG, 365). Life as self-consciousness is necessarily action; action necessarily treats the world as immediately available, self-contained "existent" (*Dasein*) "from which the fact it is brought forth by its action has disappeared" (PhG, 373). Actuality is longer understood and acted on as if it were the "work" of self-consciousness but is viewed instead as a self-sufficient existent driven by things. One no longer knows that this actuality "proceeds from its action" and that a living self-consciousness displays and ought to manifest itself in it.⁵⁵

However for Marcuse, at a certain point human consciousness gathers-up its history, and realises that no individual world's particular unity can represent nature as it is in its original unity. Human consciousness grasps that original unity can only be comprehended itself as a

continuous *division* of finite opposition involving both the continuous hermeneutical destruction of the old, and the continuous stepping-out of the new. This continuous negation and stepping-out of the new is reflected in *all* worlds if they are to remain alive. And it is at this point that Marcuse thinks that human being has reached *authentic* being, what Hegel refers to as spiritual being. It is at this point that human being begins to overcome its alienation from the world, nature and Life. It is at this point that we come to know Life (God). Crucially, it is both as a consequence of the work of human beings, and as philosophical reflection upon this work, that we come to know that the original unity of nature is Life. Without a history of work to reflect upon (socially and individually) we could never come to know God. And it is also in this sense that Hegel can claim God comes to be in the world whilst at the same time claiming that the *Logic* "...is the exposition of God, as he is in his eternal being *prior* to the creation of nature and of finite spirit."

It is through the complex correlation that exists between the identification of the self with work, the realisation that work is the work of the species, the actualisation of work as a culture, and the reflection of culture upon its work, that finally authentic human being recognises the presence of Life as the ground of its own being, i.e., authentic being recognises the universality of Life. It is at this point that authentic human being is proclaimed as that form of being which freely enacts and embodies diverse possibilities within its own ethical structures in a way that enables the continuous happening of diverse possibilities, and in a way that recognises the intersubjective character of those possibilities. Significantly, for Marcuse, Hegel not only treats this entire process as the proper history of spirit, but he also stresses that "far from being ahistorical this is a profoundly historical process."⁵⁶ That is through the principle of subjectivity Hegel claims to have accounted for the unity of the world in a manner that does not refer to any external authority.

With this brief account of Marcuse's preliminary investigation into the *ETW* we have already anticipated our encounter with the *PhG*. We now need to take a few steps back and inquire into the detail of Marcuse's claim that social diversity is grounded in both the universality of Life, and the intersubjectivity of self-consciousness.

⁵⁵ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, p.298.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.298.

Chapter Seven: Life as an Ontological Concept in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

Having completed his analysis of the tension that exists in the *Logic* between the Absolute Idea and Life, Marcuse seeks in part two of his text, to identify a similar tension in the *PhG*. However, in the *PhG* the tension resides between spirit and Life. Marcuse seeks to demonstrate how Hegel once again abandons his original ontological concept of Life in favour of the self-comprehending ontological concept of spirit: Life is subsumed to a category of spirit. In arguing in this way Marcuse certainly does not intend to devalue the notion of spirit. Rather Marcuse wishes to reinforce what he has argued in part one, that once the concept of Life loses its ascendancy as the ontological grounding of the world, then diversity (including, and perhaps most importantly, spiritual being) is threatened and univocal conceptions of Being follow. It is not my intention to follow Marcuse through all the various moves of explicating and demonstrating this tension. Our task continues to be laying down the groundwork through which to articulate Marcuse's political and social thought. In so doing it is hoped that Marcuse's work may open up interesting possibilities in approaching the primary question of this thesis: *Is there an ethical life-form that encompasses a universal criterion for social and political action whilst simultaneously allowing for the happening of social diversity?*

To this extent, in addressing part two of *HO*, it is intended to bring to the forefront what Marcuse believes to be the repressed dimension of Hegel's thought, i.e., a specific reading of Life, and to inquire into its relationship with the distinct stages of spirit. Particular attention will be paid to Chapters Twenty through to Twenty-four. It is in these chapters that Marcuse addresses directly our original question –recognition of the *other*. Benhabib describes the concern of these chapters as “the intersubjective constitution of a shared world, a social world of objects as well as of actions.” Marcuse's treatment of this issue she describes as “brilliant”.¹ In addressing these chapters I will continue to argue that central to Marcuse's proposed resolution is his insistence upon the inseparable link between ethics and ontology.

Specifically, I shall argue that in presenting his account of Hegel's famous Lordship / Bondship dialectic Marcuse is seeking an ontological, not a moral, resolution to the problem of intersubjectivity both within, and between, distinct social life-forms (worlds). In opposition to Sartrean type readings of this dialectic, Marcuse does not equate the problem of intersubjectivity with a confrontation between independent and autonomous subjects who

¹ S.Benhabib, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.xxviif.

have only two options – dominating another or being dominated themselves.² Rather, Marcuse continues to build upon his primary argument concerning the “absolute difference within Being”. Before examining in detail Marcuse’s reading of Hegel’s *Lordship / Bondship* dialectic I will make a brief statement concerning the *PhG* as a text, and Marcuse’s specific reading of this text.

7.1 *Marcuse's Interpretation of the Phenomenology of Spirit*

The *PhG*, as most people know, is written from the perspective of what Hegel refers to as freedom. It is written from the perspective of specific mode of being, looking back upon itself and articulating its own development. When viewed from this ontological perspective the *PhG* is seen to be a presentation of a particular mode of being that Hegel chooses (for historical reasons) to call freedom. Consequently, my primary concern is not to enter into a discourse of what freedom *is*, but rather to reveal what the ethical mode of being that Hegel refers to as freedom *is*. As an ontological inquiry it would be possible to call this mode of being ABC or XYZ. Indeed, it may even be effective to do so in order to avoid the abstracted and naturalistic discourse that surrounds this value laden term. However, from a socio-political and historical view there seem to be good reasons why the title of freedom should be reclaimed.³ Not the least of these reasons is the continual presence of this term in Hegel’s work – to rename this mode of being would lead to confusion.

In writing from the perspective of freedom Hegel continues Kant’s ‘revolutionary’ approach to philosophy. Just as Kant shifted attention from the object of experience to an analysis of the subject that experiences, Hegel shifts attention from freedom as a moral ideal to a dialectic of a free subject. Just as Kant sought to reveal what is presupposed by a subject capable of having the kind of experiences that the “I” has, Hegel seeks to reveal what is presupposed by a subject characterised by freedom. One might say that the *PhG* is a biographical account of freedom as it emerged, and was comprehended, in certain aspects of European society. However, it is not a history of freedom, but a metaphysical or ontological account of freedom. It seeks to describe the presuppositions of a particular mode of life that, Hegel claims, turns out to be a necessary aspect in order for all modes of life to come into being. Hegel describes what is presupposed by the fourteen distinct stages of self-consciousness, which mark the development of consciousness into a free-being. Whether Hegel thought that there were either exactly fourteen stages, delimited in exactly the way he described, or that

² For a later account of the significant differences between Marcuse’s ontological perspective and Sartre’s see, H. Marcuse, “Sartre’s Existentialism” in *From Luther to Popper*, Verso, New York, 1972, p.157-190.

³ Gadamer specifically warns against the dangers of trivialising Hegel’s notion of freedom by excessively resounding it as a slogan. He prefers to use the term *self-consciousness*. H.G. Gadamer, *Hegel’s Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies*, op.cit., p.54.

spirit had completed its development is at least questionable.⁴ Regardless, such questions are not of interest to this Thesis. What concerns us here is not the number of stages, but Marcuse's assertion that each stage is ontologically distinct, and as such enables its own distinct possibilities. Consequently, every new interpretation, every new stage of self-consciousness, announces and opens up a new kind of life-form, which is characterised by new possibilities. In order to realise new possibilities we have to give-up, or hermeneutically destroy, our old ways of life. To break loose from slavery requires a radical shift in our ethical comportment not simply the removal of our chains. Until a slave stops being a slave it has as much chance of being free as the free have of understanding "the perceptions of a dog". Until the loveless give-up being loveless, until they abandon the categories of hate and develop a comportment of love, they will remain loveless despite their overwhelming desire to be loved. Each stage of consciousness is, then, an articulation of the presuppositions of a different kind of ethical being living within a different kind of world. It is an articulation of a different kind of ethical subject disclosing different kinds of entities.

But as has already been indicated, Hegel is not simply drawing our attention to what is now widely accepted as the contextual character, and irreducible diversity of ethical life. Rather, Hegel turns history back upon itself and argues that the presuppositions of ontologically more developed forms of ethical life are in fact the same presuppositions that have been present from the first stage of sense-certainty. Whilst this is often read as making a moral claim that gives priority of one form of ethics over another, it can be interpreted otherwise. It can be interpreted as a form of re-collecting our past, in a manner in which our past continues to be uplifted into the present, and in which the present can only be fully grasped in terms of this process of uplifting. For Marcuse this marks the process of historicity. What has changed in each subsequent development, or stage, of spirit is spirit's comprehension of its own presuppositions.

Whilst the legitimacy of Hegel's account of the development of spirit may be questioned, at this level there need not be anything mysterious about this shift in comprehension. It simply marks the dialectical process of any historical and hermeneutical articulation. It is the process of philosophically identifying what specific kinds of questions are being asked within a particular articulation, and what those questions presuppose. Such philosophical identification serves to clarify rather than initiate what was already happening at a practical level in a particular society. As R.G. Collingwood points out, we do not start with an idea and then go

⁴ Collingwood argues that "Hegel nailing to the counter in advance the lie that he regarded his own philosophy as final, wrote at the end of his treatise on the philosophy of history, *Bis hierher ist das Bewusstseyn gekommen*, 'That this is as far as consciousness has reached'". R. Collingwood, *Idea of Nature*, op.cit., p.174.

on to create practises which embody this idea.⁵ We don't start from an ideal of love, or freedom, and then construct social practices and institutions that embody such an ideal. Rather, such ideals occur concurrently with the work of society. Ideas always involve the concrete business of inter-acting with, and within, the world in a particular way. It is only later, after some considerable progress has been made in solving practical problems, and the solutions to those problems have been embodied in individual socio-political practices and institutions, that philosophical aspects of society become aware of the particular kind of questions that have been asked. It is at this point that the process of culture formation (*Bildung*), founded on the principle of subjectivity, begins in earnest. Once a society has become philosophically aware of what it has been doing from the very beginning, then it can take flight and engage in inspired work. And once such a society has become philosophically aware, and inspired (enlightened), it can begin to care for such forms of life. In the *PhG*, however, this philosophical clarification supposedly concerns the work of the human species in general, not the work of a particular historical society (despite the fact that it is told from the perspective of a particular society)..

In the previous chapter it was argued that Marcuse's presentation of this process involves aspects of both Heidegger's hermeneutical destruction of facticity and Hegel's principle of subjectivity. It was suggested that the driving force of this process is "absolute difference within Being". Furthermore, it was argued that for Marcuse, the absolute difference within being contains the assertion that all encounters with nature are encounters that are coloured by our particular historicity. They are encounters which are directed by a specific, and shared, "background" – our shared background always colours and determines the kind of essents that show-up as nature. In this respect the continuous articulation of background was anticipated as none other than the world-shaping activity of spirit. It was also suggested that this form of articulation is to be understood as the embodiment of speculative thought. Articulation in respect to world-shaping is to be understood as a process involving more than simply verbal articulation, forms of story telling and rhetoric, although these activities clearly have their part. Articulation is manifested in all the activities, institutions and social practices of any particular culture. As such human beings are necessarily linked with the animation of their worlds, in the hermeneutical way I have been describing, through their involved actions, or inaction. This, it is claimed, is so despite the fact that the outcome of such action (or inaction) is often very different from what is intended.

However, more than this, I have also been arguing that Marcuse thinks that once we grasp that *all* worlds are fundamentally characterised by something like this kind of hermeneutical process, we are approaching a position from which we *can* understand *reality*, as opposed to a

⁵ R.Collingwood, *The Idea of Nature*, op.cit., p.1.

particular ontic world. We are approaching a position from which we can ask questions concerning the universality of these multiple worlds, we can ask questions concerning fundamental ontology, questions concerning the ground of all entities. It is from this perspective that Marcuse associates Hegel's dialectic with reality, and reality as the actualisation or "doing" of self-consciousness.

The "dialectic" of the process of life has essentially such a "real" character. It is not a dialectic of pure cognition, but a dialectic of praxis. The concept of doing has in Hegel this decisive meaning of expressing precisely the essence of living self-consciousness and its reality. "Something is undertaken because the doing is in and for itself the essence of reality", and the "absolute thing" is a reality, "whose existence is the reality and the doing of self-consciousness."⁶

Significantly then, Marcuse thinks that such world-shaping activity is to make a universal claim about Being. It is not simply a claim about a particular historic world. In addressing what this claim entails Marcuse argues that whatever life-form, or world, we wish to describe, whether it be the mechanistic world of the physical sciences, the spiritual worlds of indigenous societies, or the worlds of antiquity, they all presuppose, or are grounded, in the categories of Life – a continual process of appearing, of stepping out, of actualisation. For Marcuse, the ground of all presence can only be grasped as a form of motility. Most significantly, the categories of Life, as motility, are both prior to, and independent of, whatever particular life-forms are articulated-into-being, or the subject that articulates them into-being. The categories of Life are ontologically independent from individual forms of spirit.

As such, Marcuse argues that the various manifestations of spirit, the various life-forms, as they are presented in the *PhG*, should not be taken primarily as corresponding to actual historical subjects, despite the fact that no historical being can stand outside these categories. They are life-forms, ideas or ontological structures that manifest the categories of Life.

The *Phenomenology of Spirit* by no means concerns, therefore, sociological laws, historical processes, or the like. The temporality of this process, the "moments" of the movement of Life must not be interpreted as if they were actual historical periods. Rather, historical periods correspond to moments of the *Being* of historical Life (with what justification cannot be discussed here). When the history of Life as self-consciousness is analyzed into its different moments, then it will be seen that this is a history which is repeated by every existing, living being, which has

⁶ H. Marcuse, 'On The Problem Of The Dialectic', op.cit., p.36.

already occurred, and which is sustained in the unity and integrity of every life context.⁷

For Marcuse, the consequence of this is that Spirit has neither an ontological priority, nor is it some kind of ahistorical character of Life and / or human beings. Rather, the development of spirit, and its embodiment in socio-political forms, is historically contingent. Spiritual being is itself an historical life-form that emerges out of Life, not vice-versa. It is from the perspective of the embodiment of spirit as a world-shaping activity that Marcuse places so much importance upon Hegel's Lordship / Bondship dialectic. This is because, to stress once more, this dialectic has the significance of marking an ontological, not a moral, transition within Hegel's *PhG*. For Marcuse, it marks perhaps the most significant transitional stage in the becoming of spiritual being, which is none other than freedom. It marks the transition between consciousness and self-consciousness. It is a transition that defines the principle of subjectivity whereby consciousness recognises itself in the other, and is thereby transformed into self-consciousness. It is this transformation that enables the self-consciousness to embark on the path to comprehending that spirit is the ground not of Life, but of all ethical being. Furthermore, Marcuse continued to assert, until the end of his career, the importance of this dialectic in resolving the ethical problem raised by this Thesis.

We are faced with the *dialectic* of the universal and the particular: how can the human sensibility, which is *principium individuationis*, also generate a *universalizing* principle?

I refer again to the philosophical treatment of this problem in German idealism: here is the intellectual origin of the Marxian concept. For *Kant*: a universal sensorium (the pure forms of intuition) constitutes the one unified framework of sense experience, thus validating the universal categories of understanding. For *Hegel*: reflection on the content and mode of *my* immediate sense certainty reveals the "We" in the "I" of intuition and perception. When the still unreflected consciousness has reached the point where it has become conscious of itself and its relation to its objects, where it has experienced a "tran-sensible" world "behind" the sensuous appearance of things, it discovers that *we* ourselves are behind the curtain of appearance. And this "we" unfolds as social reality in the struggle between Master and Servant for "mutual recognition".⁸

⁷ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op. cit., p. 249.

⁸ H. Marcuse, *Counter-Revolution and Revolt*, op. cit., p. 73.

For Marcuse, recognition marks and firmly establishes our ability to encounter and transform the world and ourselves through what he refers to as "equality-of-self-in-otherness".

However, whilst the Master and Slave dialectic raises the necessity of recognising the other, if self-consciousness is to develop, it does not mark the realisation of self-consciousness.

Master and slave relationship is the first incomplete and untrue form in which the individuals opposing each other in a life and death struggle come together in a first universality. The objective being is seized and subjected by living self-consciousness through greed and work and absorbed into the universality of life.⁹

We are now in a position to begin to appreciate Marcuse's opening paragraph in his encounter with Hegel's *PhG*. In this paragraph Marcuse indicates the universality of Life can only ever appear in particular spiritual forms, despite the fact that it can not be reduced to these forms.

The concept of Life in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* corresponds to the intentions of this work to show the unfolding of different modes of being to be modes of unfolding of appearing spirit. The explicit emphasis is on "Life as spirit," on Life as a being that knows it is conscious of itself and "cognizes itself." Thus from the beginning human Life is in the foreground of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Life will be introduced as "self-consciousness." Self-consciousness reaches its truth through being-for- and -against each other of "Independence and Dependence," "Lordship and Bondage"; these opposites are then united through "*Bildung*" (cultural formation) and "labor" -these are ontological determinations of human Life and, what is decisive, of human Life in all its historicity and concrete happening in the world.¹⁰

In this opening passage we can clearly see Marcuse's intention to both interpret the distinct stages of self-consciousness as stages of spirit, and spirit as manifestations of Life. Spirit is not the ground of Life; Life is the ground of spirit. Certainly, Marcuse accepts Hegel's argument that when human life, as freedom, turns in and reflects upon itself it recognises its own presuppositions as those of the *other*; freedom recognises its own presuppositions to be those of both the world and the original unity of nature. However, Marcuse interprets this original unity not as Absolute Knowledge, nor as Absolute Spirit, but as Life. In order to comprehend what is going on here we must not mistake any of the distinct appearances of Life as spirit, including spirit once it has attained freedom, for Life itself. We must not mistake any of

⁹ H.Marcuse, 'On The Problem Of The Dialectic', op.cit., p.29.

¹⁰ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.228.

Life's manifestations as having some kind of ontological (as opposed to ethical) privilege. For Life as an ontological concept remains what is presupposed by all its forms. Life remains the ground of being that authentic human being re-enacts. It is concerning Life as a constellation of presuppositions that Marcuse once again stresses that Life is universal medium that embodies all particular life-forms, and a process that is embodied by all life-forms if they are alive. Life is the clearing, the field of relatedness, the medium in which entities are encountered.

The being of Life is nothing thinglike, objectlike, at which beings would break, or something which can be overcome by another being; it is not a being among others. It is much more a *medium*, a middle for all beings, through which all being is mediated such that it can be encountered only through this mediation. It is "fluidity", which carries all being in-itself, which runs through and penetrates all, and which, qua this fluidity, constitutes the "substance" of beings. It is through which all being receives "sustenance." As this universal fluidity Life does not run to exhaustion but remains infinitely equal-with-itself as a form of infinite independence.¹¹

In claiming that Life as universal fluidity "does not run to exhaustion but remains infinitely equal-with-itself as a form of infinite independence", Marcuse captures the essence of the position we are now familiar with – Life is the unity that is presupposed by all forms of being. To *be* is to be within Life. To *be alive* is to manifest change or motility, it is to *be* continually appearing anew. To *be alive* presupposes motility, and to the extent that individual selves and worlds take on meaning they do so through specific modes of motility, through their mode of Life. For Marcuse, what distinguishes individual life-forms as individual is how Life as motility is embodied. The various embodiments of motility distinguish the various modes of Life. Spiritual life-forms have a particular capacity to renew themselves as spirit. Indeed, spirit's capacity to renew itself through "activity" is precisely what separates spiritual being from other simpler forms of being that experience Life as something that simply happens to them as change.

Life as unity is not somehow separate or abstracted from the manifold of beings that presuppose it. For, as we have already seen in some detail, Marcuse accepts Hegel's presentation of the necessity of universals (what is presupposed) to be embodied. Life as unity; as a continuous motility, as a continuous appearance and actualisation, as that which is presupposed by all living beings, must necessarily be embodied. However, we have also been alerted to the fact that self-consciousness continually misinterprets the meaning it gives to particular embodiments or manifestations of Life, for Life as unity, for Life itself. And this, as

¹¹ Ibid., p.232.

was argued above, is also the case with the physical sciences. For example biology seeks to identify Life with the appearance of a thinglike property that enables all biological life-forms to develop as genetic structures. In so doing biology reduces Life as motility to its own world view, i.e., reduces Life to a particular kind of property. It also reduces all diverse life-forms, such as self-consciousness to various manifestations of that property - i.e, genetic functioning. Against these kind of views Marcuse insists that whilst different forms of self-consciousness embody Life in distinct forms, Life cannot be reduced to any one of these distinct modes. Life as original unity remains infinitely independent from its embodiments, and as such it cannot be conceptually reduced to this meaning or that meaning. Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel is reinforced by Hegel's own words.

The simple infinity, or absolute concept, may be called the simple essence of Life, the soul of the world, the universal lifeblood, which courses everywhere and whose flow is neither checked nor interrupted by any distinction but is itself all distinction as that which sublates them within itself; pulsating within itself, but itself motionless; shaken to its depths without being unrestful. It is *equal-with-itself*, for the distinctions are merely tautologies; they are distinctions that are none. This being, equal-with-itself, therefore stands in relation only to itself.¹²

Whilst Marcuse interprets Hegel as presenting the medium of Life (i.e., original unity and motility) as being irreducibly independent from human beings and their concerns, he is in no way claiming that individual embodiments of Life are independent from human concerns. Nor is Marcuse claiming that the *meanings* of individual life-forms are independent from human concerns. Marcuse is not claiming that the meaning of human concerns must in some way be reduced to the meaning of Life in the manner in which both the physical sciences and many religious forms do. He is claiming that the meaning of individual life-forms arise as a direct consequence of human concerns, of their practical involvements. Marcuse is claiming the meaning of individual life-forms arise as a direct consequence of human activity, of what was referred to above as articulation - culture formation.

Significantly, once the issue of meaning is raised, that is, once meaning becomes an issue, we have already entered the realm of distinct forms of historical self-consciousness residing in the distinct cultural worlds that they have collectively built. We have put aside considerations of nature and assumed the existence of self-consciousness or spirit. To raise the issue of meaning - as opposed to representation - is to assume the perspective of human being, as spiritual being; as a mode of being capable of renewing itself through its own activity. Consequently, once the meaning of Life becomes an issue for human beings it raises at least

¹² Hegel quoted by H.Marcuse, *ibid.*, p.230.

two distinct kinds of questions. First, how and why did spiritual modes of life concerned with meaning arise from nature? Such questions in the *PhG* centre upon the genealogy of self-consciousness as a fundamental mode of spiritual life. Second, it raises ontological questions that center upon the presuppositions of self-consciousness as a fundamental mode of spiritual life, and why self-consciousness itself should be valued. Such questions involve a description of what self-consciousness as an ethical form of Life entails. I shall begin by addressing both these kinds of questions in turn, i.e., as distinct questions. However, as the following section develops I shall merge them into a single discussion. In addressing these questions it is not my concern to present all the twists and turns of Hegel's Lordship and Bondage dialectic, but rather to highlight what this transformation is *from* and what it is *to*.

7.2 Lordship and Bondage

7.2.1. Desire

Marcuse interprets Hegel's account of recognition as in part answering certain genealogical questions. For Hegel self-consciousness is not a natural or immediate stance that human beings have towards the world. Self-consciousness, as a form of background, is an historical perspective that must be articulated through activity in order to come-into-being. Self-consciousness is a particular historical comportment, which enables other beings to show themselves or appear in a way that is hidden from human consciousness when characterised by sense-certainty, perception or understanding. How then does human consciousness make the transformation from these preceding modes of being to that of self-consciousness? Marcuse re-interprets Hegel's answer to this question in reference to the concept of Life. Self-conscious beings begin to concern themselves with the universality of Life, and its infinite forms, only after a protracted and mediated struggle with other conscious beings. For Marcuse, it is precisely because of the universality of Life, precisely because of its irreducibility to a particular form, that consciousness initially encounters Life as something *other* than itself. Life is initially encountered through the life of an *other*. The other is understood here as not simply another human being, but as all other distinct embodiments of Life that constitute the world. At this point conscious beings are aware of the other, but are still oblivious to the fact that their own certainty of self, their own certainty of presence is the same as the other, which is to say is the same as Life. This obliviousness takes the form of an ignorance of the unity that underpins the other, and an ignorance of the unity of one's own self.

Consciousness can only interpret the other through the mode of Desire. Like all the categories discussed here, Marcuse interprets desire not as a "psychic act" or a moral attitude, but as a particular comportment that conscious beings have towards other existents.

Desire is an ethical comportment that characterises the background from within which the "I" encounters such existents. It determines what can appear and what can not appear.

In desire the I takes existents to be the "other" of itself that it must sublate and appropriate in order to maintain itself as I. Thus it takes the other to be essentially "nothingness," negativity, as something that primarily exists *for it*, for the I. It uses, consumes, destroys the other, and it *must* do so because it can sustain itself only as a *self*, as an individual through the sublation of the other, for it is only an individual insofar as it is juxtaposed to the other. But what it appropriated in desire and destroyed in its independence is precisely what is desired and sublated as an object. The I desires only what it *itself* is not, what is its other and stands opposed to it.¹³

From the perspective of freedom desire is thoroughly self-defeating; it must remain forever in a state of frustration and dissatisfaction. For desire is dependent upon objects that stand over it whilst at the same time closing off the possibilities of certain objects emerging for it. Desire, in order to sustain itself in its continual consumption and destruction of the other, can not yet grasp that the other is the source of its own objects of (dis)satisfaction. Desire can not grasp that by annihilating the other it is annihilating the motivation of its own motility, the motivation of its own Life. This does not mean that by annihilating and closing down possible sources of enrichment – i.e., possible sources of satisfaction – that life-forms characterised by desire must eventually perish. For as long as desire opposes itself to Life, then Life will continually create new objects for consumption. Ethical systems characterised by desire may well develop into sustainable and relatively stable socio-political forms. This is one of the ways that Marcuse will later characterise advanced capitalism – as the systemic capacity to produce goods for a society characterised by desire. Significantly, however, life-forms characterised by desire become trapped within a vicious circle. In order to be what and who they are such life-forms, like all forms of consciousness (including spirit), require an other to stand in opposition to. But what they *are* (desire) also necessitates the destruction of the other. As such, desire must continuously shift its focus from one object to the next, consuming and destroying every thing in its path without ever finding satisfaction. For Marcuse human life characterised by desire, characterised by dissatisfaction with the other, is precisely the life described so vividly by Sartre – it is a life that fluctuates between sadism and masochism. Desire always remains divided or alienated from itself and the world.

Marcuse characterises desire's dissatisfaction with the other through Hegel's concept of "objectification". By this he means

Desire is "conditioned" by its object. It can satisfy itself only when the desired object stands over and against it; it thus presupposes the object that it seeks to sublate. Desire can be satisfied only through "the sublation of the other; for there to be sublation, there must be this other".¹⁴

Marcuse entire interpretation of Hegel's notion of freedom is interpreted as the attempt by self-consciousness to come to terms with the object that stands over and conditions it. Freedom in this sense becomes a process associated with overcoming the separation or alienation between the self-consciousness and the object. Freedom, for Marcuse is a process of de-objectification. And it is from this perspective that desire has a primary role to play in the realisation of freedom – all free beings must pass through desire. In contrast to Kant's moral perspective, Hegel does not claim that desire itself is to be eternally resisted – for to do so would create another form of division within the self. Marcuse follows Hegel in arguing that it is as a direct consequence of encountering the world as an *other*, i.e., through the immediate existence of the desiring I, that the very possibility freedom arises. The perspective of the immediate desiring I is, then, none other than what is presupposed by the tradition's presentation of a bifurcated world; of a duality between the I (self-consciousness) and an independent objective world. And, as we have seen, traditional ontology is the background articulation from which Hegel's own perspective of freedom dialectically emerges (securing both the importance of freedom and philosophy's role in realising freedom). It emerges not in the form of a dogmatic assertion of morality, but through a description of an ontological life-form that is explicitly aware of what is implicit within desire. It emerges through the description of self-consciousness as a mode of being that recognises the other in a very specific way. Consequently, Marcuse concludes true satisfaction of desire requires not resistance to its call "but breaking out of the objectifying mode"¹⁵. True satisfaction involves grasping that the 'absolute difference within Being,' the *other*, does not necessarily entail alienation, despite the fact that it entails difference.

The second group of questions mentioned above approach what it is that distinct modes of self-conscious presuppose in order to be what they are, and why they should be valued? They involve what a deobjectified mode of life beyond desire would entail. It is at this point we have returned to the imperative driving our original inquiry. We have returned to the problem of dealing with conflict in a way that does not involve the terror of annihilating an opposing individual. We have arrived at a point where an ontological description of a particular mode of being that is explicitly aware of its social foundations is offered. This mode of being which

¹³ Ibid., p.244.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.244.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.245.

Hegel refers to as self-consciousness has the potential of embracing difference as its life-blood rather than annihilating it. Marcuse interprets Hegel's account of recognition as an attempt to uncover and articulate the presuppositions of a mode of being that recognises itself within the other. Self-consciousness as a mode of life presupposes "...being-for- and -against each other of "Independence and Dependence," "Lordship and Bondage"; these opposites are then united through "*Bildung*" (cultural formation) and "labor." The entire second part of Marcuse's text is directed towards revealing that not only does self-consciousness presuppose "recognition", but consequently all forms of socio-political life presuppose recognition. Socio-political life is fundamentally intersubjective. Marcuse argues that all forms of socio-political have a "we-like" character, an "equality-of-self-in-otherness". But more than this, Marcuse also argues, that this we-like character is necessarily connected to the embodiment of Life as motility. But what does he mean by this?

Whilst Hegel's Lordship and Bondage dialectic seeks to present both a genealogy of the transition from the desiring consciousness to the recognising self-consciousness, and seeks to describe the presuppositions of both these modes of being, Marcuse is not suggesting that the self-consciousness that emerges from this struggle is free and authentic being. Indeed Marcuse suggests "...it lives 'for-itself and at the cost of the world', toward which it retains a 'negative' attitude."¹⁶ The primary forms through which self-consciousness manifests its negativity to the world are of course Stoicism, Scepticism and the Unhappy Consciousness. However, from the perspective of freedom, the characterisation and attainment of "recognition" as a fundamental presupposition of the self-consciousness is of great significance for the actualisation of authentic being. It is of great significance because, for Marcuse, it associates self-consciousness, as an ethical life-form, in a most fundamental manner with Life. Such an association is not present in previous ethical forms characterised by desire.

The analysis of the ontological concept of Life has led us to the conclusion that the "we-like" character of this process is the necessary basis on which the structure of self-equality-in-otherness characteristic of self-consciousness as well as the infinity of Life can be realized.¹⁷

With this Marcuse begins his presentation of how self-consciousness presupposes a social environment - a background - that is characterised by activity (*Tun*). Whilst Marcuse analyses the concept of activity through the perspective of *labor* he stresses that labor is only "the first

¹⁶ Ibid., p.263.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.250.

form of this activity."¹⁸ As such Marcuse is not presenting the significance of recognition through the eyes of some kind of vulgar Marxist. Certainly labor (understood here as the production of material objects) is to be considered as both an important, and the most prevalent form of action. But action also takes other forms and needs to be grasped in terms of what has been referred to above as articulation – a notion which is closely associated with the more comprehensive process of cultural formation (*Bildung*).

For Marcuse the significance of Hegel's Lordship and Bondship dialectic is its powerful presentation of how the objective world begins to lose its dominance over humanity. The object that had previously stood over and determined the very being of desiring "I" begins to be stripped of its authority in a way that allows self-conscious beings to become who and what they are through their actions. This dialectic symbolises breaking the hold that nature has had over human being. Nature is to be comprehended here in the sense it was used above; nature is the *other*. However, this hold is not broken by collapsing the distinction between self-consciousness and the other, by some kind of merging or identification of the two. Rather, self-consciousness becomes aware that the other is the actuality of its past activity, and that the other enables the self-consciousness to be what it is any given moment and place. Self-consciousness cannot be without difference.

The process of deobjectification, whereby self-consciousness comes to recognise itself in the other, is not however a once-off event. The outcome of our actions, which have released us from the grip of nature, also carry the continual danger of reasserting the power of the object, albeit in a different manner. We saw above how Marcuse interprets the reassertion of the object as a statement of Heideggerian "falling", of "inauthenticity". The effect of the reassertion of the object is that the very process of culture building has a tendency to mystify itself in such a way that it resumes an alienated character. Sometimes this involves a negative attitude to the world, sometimes a forgetfulness, most often a confused combination of the two. In all cases ethical structures reposition themselves in a way that replicates nature's original dominance over humanity. In Marxist terms this reassertion of the object, particularly as a consequence of the forgetfulness of human beings, is known as reification. In interpreting Hegel's lordship and bondsman dialectic in this manner Marcuse emphasises the original problematic of Hegel's philosophy, and also stresses its continued relevance to contemporary social and political theory.

In arguing that recognition is a presupposition of freedom, Marcuse is claiming that all distinct forms of social being presuppose a "we-like" character. In the same way that Kant presents his categories of experience as the presuppositions of the experiencing subject,

¹⁸ Ibid., p.263.

Marcuse claims that Hegel's presentation of the self-consciousness presupposes a we-like character. But what does Hegel's concept of recognition entail? Marcuse is not interpreting Hegel as tautologically asserting that a society necessitates that its individual members mutually recognise each other in order to be a society. Nor is he claiming that they need to recognise each other in a particular moral way in order to be a society, i.e., as ends in themselves, although both these conditions will eventually flow from Hegel's notion of recognition. Rather, Marcuse is interpreting Hegel as claiming that in order for freedom to emerge, the desiring consciousness needs to recognise that the objects that stand over them – i.e., world – are of its own making (*Tun*). Furthermore it must recognise that such world-shaping action only occurs as a social act; it is the act of the species, which necessitates a particular form of mutual recognition (being-for-itself and being-for-another). And finally consciousness needs to recognise that if a particular social-form is alive then it is in fact a re-enactment of Life as original unity; social acts embody the universality of Life as a motility and as medium of continual change. Social acts are what enable the continual appearance of the new. Recognition, so understood, involves a complexity of both acknowledgment and cognition that takes place through a self-reflexive and self-relating process.¹⁹ Whilst the self-consciousness that emerges from Hegel's account of the struggle between lord and bondsman has not yet unified all these aspects of recognition, all aspects are present in this struggle, albeit dispersed between the lord and bondsman. Marcuse summarises this point in the following words: "The lord determines its being-for-another only inessentially, through 'enjoyment'; the bondsman attains for-itselfness only through objectness." Neither the overcoming of objectification nor the unity among individuals has been fully completed at this stage."²⁰

When Marcuse uses the term "for-itselfness" to describe the bondsman he is referring to the process of deobjectification – the process whereby self-consciousness begins to grasp the world as a world of its own doing, and as a consequence begins to grasp its own essential nature. Furthermore, the bondsman only comes to comprehend this process by his own involvement in it, i.e., as an active labouring subject. Being-for-itselfness is to be understood as one aspect of this essential nature. It points towards the subjective or active aspect of self-consciousness. It is the independent aspect. Being-for-itself is the aspect of self-consciousness that the bondsman develops in his struggle with the lord, it is an aspect of which he is initially devoid. In this regard, one of the most significant effects of the bondsman's struggle with the lord is the sudden awakening of the bondsman to the fragility of the world and everything he took as given. In fact, far from the world being a given and fixed entity whose character can

¹⁹ For a summary of the complexity of epistemological, ontological and moral issues involved in Hegel's presentation of recognition, see M. Inwood, *op.cit.*, p.246-247.

²⁰ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, *op.cit.*, p.263.

be relied upon to remain essentially stable, the world itself dissolves into a constellation of tenuous correlations. In a passage where Hegel anticipates Kierkegaard, Marcuse states;

In "experiencing fear of the lord" in the course of its struggle unto life and death, the bondsman "has been fearful, not of this or that particular thing or just at odd moments, but its whole being has been seized with dread". Its existence was at stake and was put to risk. This dread has led its Life into the "pure, universal moment," into the "absolute melting away of everything stable." The stability and independence of things, surrounded by which the bondsman lived, has been shattered. Through this its consciousness "has been inwardly dissolved, has trembled in every fiber of its being, and everything solid and stable has been shaken to its foundations". The stable objectivity of its Life and world have disappeared in "a pure universal movement," the "objective form" of its existence has dissolved. But in the course of this dissolution into absolute dread the true dimension of its existence has emerged.²¹

Marcuse argues, however, that this moment of epiphany, which is so often associated with near-death experience, is still grounded in a mere feeling of absolute power. The bondsman has not yet freely grasped its significance. In Hegelian terms consciousness has not yet returned to itself; it has not yet realised that the world, which has been "shaken to its foundations", is a world of its own doing. For consciousness to realise this it has to move beyond the struggle unto life and death and be enslaved into the world of labor. "Through labor ... it comes back to itself." For Marcuse, it is ultimately through the act of labor that all aspects of recognition, referred to above, are expressed. Labor not only extends the bondsman's recognition of the character of the world as product of doing, but labor also enables the recognition of the we-like character of *Bildung*, and consequently the world. Most importantly, this we-like character finds its permanence as a process of creation. All three aspects of recognition are present in the following passage.

Labor attains this result insofar as it is "constructive" (*bildende*) and "formative" (*formierende*) activity. By constructing and forming things, it creates their subsistence and actuality, while the desire of the lord, by contrast, only destroys actuality and makes it disappear. The satisfaction of desire lacks "the side of objectivity and permanence. Labor, on the other hand, is desire held in check, fleetingness staved off; in other words, labor *forms* and *shapes* the thing. The negative relation to the object (in labor) becomes its *form* and something

²¹ Ibid., p.259.

permanent". The object of labor persists and remains in the "form" which laboring consciousness has given it. The actuality of things is no other than the "forming activity" of the laborer. Thus "through labor" dependent consciousness steps "outside itself into the element of permanence".²²

Whilst neither bondsman nor lord is able to unite these distinct aspects of recognition, "we", from the perspective of freedom, can grasp that the unity of recognition will ultimately find authentic expression not in this or that *particular* social act, but in action as universality; in the motility of "constructing and forming things"; in stepping "outside itself into the element of permanence".²³ Furthermore the kind of possibilities that we can realise through our actions remain dependent on our particular backgrounds, and the particular articulation that we are involved in. The possibilities open to us are dependent on our historicity. However, what the bondsman does come to recognise is that her independence comes about precisely through acting in the world, not through some form continual introspection and search for an essential inner-thing-like-nature. Furthermore, independence or meaningfulness is not possible by simply surrendering to the determining power of an objectified cosmos.

The objectivity it has labored on is no longer an alien, an "other" for it but rather its own work, the actuality it has brought about. "Through this rediscovery of itself," the life of the bondsman "acquires its *own sense*, precisely in labor where it seemed to have only *estranged meaning*" It becomes conscious that it is not only a dependent being, merely existing-for-another, but also precisely in this dependence "in-and-for-itself."²⁴

The bondsman has come to recognise that freedom involves a special kind of dependence manifested in a comportment *towards* life. The bondsman has come to recognise that his actions in the *everyday involvement* of labour are precisely how freedom is attained. Freedom, as such, involves both the independence of being-for-itself and the dependence of being-for-another as it is manifested in everyday involvement, i.e., in a particular determinate life-form.

²² Ibid., p.260.f.

²³ The universality of freedom expressed in the notion of a universal desire to act rather than as particular actions marks the truth of what is usually referred to as 'negative freedom'. It is what is often referred to as freedom *from* and it is this aspect of freedom that is embodied in the Lord. The classic statement of this formulation in recent times is Isaiah Berlin's essay 'Two Concepts of Freedom'. The difference between Berlin and Hegel is that Hegel insists that freedom must embody both a freedom *towards* and a freedom *from*. I will return to this point below. See I.Berlin, 'Two Concepts of Freedom' in D.Miller, *Liberty*, OUP, Oxford, 1991.

²⁴ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*. op.cit., p.261.

Precisely in its conditions of extreme unfreedom, the bondsman will experience absolute freedom over and against all that is, an experience of "the truth of pure negativity and the being-for-itself"; precisely in its most objectified form will it attain that break through objectification, which it had already achieved in labor for the lord.²⁵

However, freedom as a mode of life still remains out of reach for the bondsman; there are still aspects of recognition presupposed by freedom that are beyond the bondsman's grasp. For if labor is to truly embody the dimensions that have so far been discussed, it must be distinguished from slavery. And regardless of the bondsman's transformation of consciousness it would be an absurdity to suggest that his cringing and servile comportment was fully expressive of meaningful life. The bondsman's servile comportment prevents the lord from genuinely extending him recognition (acknowledgment) as an independent being-for-itself. Furthermore the bondsman's servile character of only being-for-another prevents the lord from positing himself as a being-for-another. That is, the lord's contempt for the bondsman prevents the lord from achieving the kind of recognition that the lord himself seeks. For Marcuse one of the most significant points that is made in the struggle between the bondsman and the lord is that freedom involves *both* a freedom *towards*, and a freedom *from*; dependence and independence; being-for-another and being-for-itself. As such the lord too embodies necessary aspects of freedom, specifically freedom *from* and the desire to be acknowledged by another respected self, aspects which must be present in any deobjectified comportment to the world, i.e., in authentic being.

For Marcuse, the lord represents the dissatisfaction that the desiring consciousness feels towards the objective world. For whilst the desiring I's dissatisfaction with the objective world may ultimately only be satisfied when the desiring I's comportment to the world is transformed, at this level the lord is incapable of accepting the kind of acknowledgment he craves. The lord can not grasp that the determination of his life in terms of a being that is driven to enslave another is precisely what prevents him from accepting acknowledgment from the slave. The lord's actions in part determine the slave, as a slave, who in turn can not be respected. The more successful the lord is in his life as a lord, i.e., in enslaving people, the fewer people there are whose respect he would want. Indeed, the only person who the lord could respect would be the person capable of enslaving him, and as such denying him respectful recognition. The lord as such embodies a sadomasochist comportment to the world, a comportment that points towards the impossibility of attempting to possess an other in the manner characterised by desire.

²⁵ Ibid., p.259.

However, the moment characterised by the lord is not only a negative one that must be overcome in order to achieve freedom. For the lord represents a fundamental problem in regards to social recognition. The recognition that the lord seeks can not simply be given by one moral agent to another. If it could, it would neither be an issue nor would it have any value. Recognition must in some way be earned. To be recognised in this sense would seem to involve a continual process of struggle through which individual self-consciousness must assert itself time and time again. Eventually Marcuse will unfold this within a life-mode characterised by continual process of actualisation, i.e., freedom will be presented in terms of a mode of life that presupposes the extension of respectful recognition on the basis of asserting one's self through the continual involvement in distinct social articulations (i.e., forms of action). Consequently, for Marcuse there is no hope of embodying freedom without being recognised as a serious being. The withdrawal of recognition, as is the case in all forms of terror, is the withdrawal of the possibility of freedom. But how then is recognition claimed from those who refuse to extend it? It is in answer to this question that Marcuse reads Hegel's presentation of the lord. The positive moment of the lord, the moment to be preserved and uplifted into the life-form of freedom, is both the meaninglessness of a determinate life devoid of recognition, and the necessity of continually reasserting one's claim to recognition. Recognition is not some kind of human right. Recognition is the response of other self-conscious subjects to a particular ethical comportment.

Marcuse is interpreting Hegel as revealing the presuppositions of a life-form that is defined in terms of its ability to continually take-up life – a life-form he refers to as freedom. For Marcuse what this amounts to is the claim that crucial aspects of the meaningfulness of freedom are located in its motility or constitution as a life-form not its external manifestations – i.e., as a form of action rather than a particular act. The meaningfulness of freedom can not simply be located in its current determinate appearance, it must also involve freedom's ability to appear and re-appear. Any life-form characterised by freedom that seeks to continually take-up life must also express itself in terms of freedom *from* any particular determination of life. And it is this aspect of freedom that the lord embodies in his willingness to struggle unto death in order to *be* recognised. The lord embodies freedom's preparedness to risk everything, to give-up everything including one's own determinate life in order to sustain itself as motility. Whilst freedom is beyond the grasp of the lord and the bondsman as desiring I's, the lord nonetheless symbolises an immediate awareness of the importance of being recognised by another, and the contingency of particular determinate forms of life. Hegel leaves no doubt that he thinks this to be a necessary element of freedom.

And it is only through staking one's Life that freedom is won; only thus is it proved that for self-consciousness, its essential being is not just being, not the *immediate*

form in which it appears, not its submergence in the expansion of Life, but rather that there is nothing present which would not be regarded as a vanishing moment, that it is only as pure being-for-self.²⁶

Marcuse interprets this passage as displaying the necessity of individuals driven by desire to continually prove and exhibit their freedom as "pure being-for-itselfness." However, the point of this drive to prove one's self is, like all of Hegel's dialectics, not what it initially appears. Certainly, it is as a direct consequence of the desiring I's drive to prove them selves as pure being-for-itself that we are led into the struggle unto life and death, through which the self-consciousness glimpses that meaningfulness has as much to do with an openness to take-up life as the determinations of what is taken-up. Through this struggle self-consciousness also glimpses the insights of the bondsman discussed above. But it is also through the lord's action of allowing the other to remain alive as his slave that a mode of being is established that stakes a claim for continual recognition. The implicit pact between master and slave is that the slave is given his life in exchange for giving continual recognition to the lord by satisfying his every desire. The demand of self-consciousness as pure being-for-itself is in fact also a demand for being-for-another – for recognition of the self. And clearly this recognition cannot be obtained by killing the other – the other must *remain*. In allowing the other to remain the first step has been taken to the extension of mutual recognition. In this sense Hegel first draws our attention to the fact that freedom is a social act that presupposes mutual recognition. For Marcuse, freedom as a life-form presupposes that individuals "must *reciprocally* and consciously set each other free and must "recognise" each other".

Without this recognition, which equally involves being-for-itself and positing oneself as a being-for-another, it is not clear how we would distinguish labor from slavery. In formal terms it may be argued that recognition of being-for-itself-and-another must unfold through a Kantian like formulation of treating others as ends in themselves, rather than as a means to an end. However, as Hegel's presentation of the struggle unto life and death vividly reveals the emergence of this kind of Kantian morality is not self-evident. The struggle between lord and bondsman is an explanation of the complexity of extending this kind of recognition. It is a complexity that takes in the positive "truth" of the lord's being as well as the bondsman. The lord's presence, then, is not simply to reveal the bondsman insights into the significance of labor. But rather his presence also indicates that recognition must involve a freedom *from* as well as a freedom *towards*. Certainly, to be absolutely free from all determinate modes of life is a pure abstraction; it collapses into the absurdity of vulgar liberalism. But equally to be "chained" to a particular act of labor without recognition as being-for-itself, without being taken seriously can also never amount to a full realisation of freedom.

²⁶ Hegel quoted by H. Marcuse, *Ibid.*, p. 253.

Consequently, for Marcuse both the lord and the bondsman contribute in significant ways to the beginning of the deobjectification of the world. They both embody necessary but still disunited presuppositions of what a life-form characterised by freedom would entail. For Marcuse freedom must embody both a freedom from and a freedom towards. Freedom is to be found in the notion of being prepared to give-up everything in order to take-up everything, in a life-form that recognises that the meaning of Life is not to be found in any immediate appearance of Life, but in Life as motility. Freedom is the realisation that independence is an independence from the determinate object as the other (the world), but in a way that can only be enabled by the others presence. To assimilate or annihilate the other is to be characterised by desire and to inhibit freedom. As such independence can only be realised by grasping that the meaning of world is to be found in comprehending the world as a world of humanity's doing, as the species work. Importantly, in order to grasp this particular forms of self-consciousness must actualise themselves as individual *doing* entities. To become such a doing entity is to be "dependent" upon the *forming* of new objects in a way that presupposes (necessitates) mutual social recognition. Articulation as cultural formation presupposes taking other people seriously. Freedom involves being-for-itself-and-being-for-another. It is from this perspective that Marcuse claims the fundamental element common to these categories is *activity*.

7.3.2 Transformation of Self-Consciousness to Reason and the Historicity of the Life Process.

What then would the unification of the distinct aspects of freedom, which are embodied separately in the lord and the bondsman, entail? Marcuse presents Hegel's answer to this question as the transformation of self-consciousness into reason. The lord and bondsman dialectic commenced, but did not complete, the process of deobjectification. For Marcuse authentic freedom presupposes this process to be complete. Marcuse claims completion must involve both the unification of the distinct aspects of freedom, and a transformation of the self-consciousness from a negative to a positive comportment to the world. Furthermore, it must involve the comprehension of this process as an historical process, meaning not only that this process takes place within history, but more importantly it is characterised by historicity. The life-form that embodies this comportment is reason. Consequently, for Marcuse the presuppositions of reason – its ontological structure – unfold around a self-relating mode of life that comprehends the world as a product of its own positive doing; that this doing has a we-like character; and that this doing takes place within a temporal structure in which the past continues to be stretched into the present in a way that effects the future.

Marcuse starts this stage of his exposition by drawing our attention to the fact that, following the struggle between the lord and bondsman, the *PhG* seeks to show that life-forms

characterised by self-consciousness still fall short of freedom. They do so because they continue to display what Hegel refers to as a negative relation towards the world. Such life-forms continue to try and overcome what opposes the freedom of the self-consciousness, i.e. the objective world. Life as self-consciousness still cannot grasp that authentic freedom can only ever be realised in determinate existence, despite the fact it can never be reduced to this or that determination – freedom can only ever be realised in otherness. Until self-consciousness comprehends this aspect of freedom, the world will remain alien to the self-consciousness. Whilst, as a consequence of the struggle between the lord and the bondsman, consciousness has raised itself up to the level of self-consciousness, and now labours upon the world, its labours continue to be characterised by desire. As such, self-consciousness remains in a “negative relation” to the world. The three main ontological characterisations of this negative attitude are, as noted above, Stoicism, which attempts to overcome its dependent relationship with the other (world) by ignoring it; Scepticism which attempts to overcome the other by abolishing it; the Unhappy Consciousness which seeks to locate the essentiality of the other in a world beyond the present. We need not investigate these categories any further for our interest is in uncovering the presuppositions of the positive comportment to the world.

For Marcuse the transformation from a negative to a positive relation to the world occurs through a self-relating (knowing) form of activity. Furthermore, it is a form of activity whereby the bifurcation between the self-consciousness and the world is dissolved through a process of mediation. Marcuse claims that it is through this process of mediation that the original problematic of Hegel’s philosophy once more comes to the forefront and is solved. Hegel thinks he has moved beyond the presuppositions of traditional ontology with what is now named *reason*. Indeed, Marcuse announces that reason “is *itself* the world; possesses the world positively as its own”.²⁷ In comprehending what this announcement involves we must remember that Marcuse is presenting reason here as a particular ontological mode of being, not as Absolute Knowledge or Absolute spirit – reason is here a mode of Life. In describing reason as a mode of Life Marcuse interprets Hegel as once again presenting the presuppositions of what this mode of being entails. It is in this respect that we can begin to appreciate what Marcuse means when he suggests that in the development of Life from self-consciousness to reason, “the aspect of ‘otherness’ of self-consciousness, its objectivity, now gets named the ‘world’”.²⁸ For to encounter the world through the mode of Life that Hegel calls reason is no longer to encounter otherness, but rather reason encounters itself. It encounters itself because reason as a mode of Life knows the world to be its own and reveals it as such, “...namely, the actuality of self-consciousness. Only the world which has been ‘discovered’ and ‘understood’ can provide the basis for complete unification of self-

²⁷ H. Marcuse, *Hegel’s Ontology*, p.267.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.267.

consciousness with its otherness."²⁹ To the extent that the world is interpreted and grasped as a world permeated by active self-consciousness then the world is being engaged from the perspective of reason. Clearly, reason is not to be comprehended here as a mode of Life that reflects a *particular* rational and logical structure.

In describing reason as a mode of Life Marcuse is well aware that even at this early stage reason is assuming a tendency towards subsuming Life itself. Even at this early stage Hegel is tending towards Life's subsumption as a category of pure knowledge (as Marcuse described in the *Logic*). However, Life's ontological status is still ambivalent and it is in this ambivalence that Marcuse remains interested.

How much Hegel still retains the guiding Idea of the full Being of Life, even in this strong orientation of the whole exposition toward the idea of knowledge, is revealed by the fact that the actualization of self-conscious reason takes place through the "activity" of concrete being-for and -against each other of different self-consciousness and not through knowledge alone. The concept of "work" and "the-thing-itself", which are further developed as the "doing of each and everyone", are the central categories via which "spiritual essence" comes to be discovered as the truth of Life.³⁰

However, at this stage in the *PhG* reason remains a mode of Life.³¹ Furthermore, reason as a process that involves the deobjectification of the world does not simply burst upon the scene like a discovery in the physical sciences. It is an historical and hermeneutical process that occurs through the life of a people not a person. It is a process that will transform both the individual and the act through which the self-consciousness is individuated. "Reason is therefore first actualised in truth through a free people".³² In occurring through the historical life of a free people, rather than as a "natural" process, reason also has a temporal character; it does not simply leave its past behind. Reason is characterised by historicity.

At the beginning of the section on "Reason" Hegel also indicates that historicity is the fundamental aspect of the actualization of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is in truth "all reality" because it proves and shows itself to be such by becoming all reality. As has been emphasized numerous times, self-displaying and self-confirmation constitute the essence of Life. Hegel emphasizes this same

²⁹ Ibid., p.267.

³⁰ Ibid., p.267.

³¹ The stage referred to here remains that of 'Freedom of self-consciousness: Stoicism, Scepticism, and the Unhappy Consciousness.'

³² Hegel quoted by H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.269.

quality in the case of historicity as well. The *unmediated* "presence" of the unity between self-consciousness and the world is only an "abstraction" whose "essence and intrinsic being" consist only "*in the movement of its becoming*". In every mode of its "relation to otherness," to the "world", and therefore in every mode of its actualization, consciousness is dependent on the stage attained by the "process of coming to self-consciousness of World-spirit." The actualization of self-consciousness is in truth a becoming conscious of what has already been. The actuality of spirit depends on "what it has already *become* or what it already is in-itself". Although the mode of this dependence (between the actuality of spirit and its past history) has not been clarified yet, we know in any event that the being of World-spirit is dependent on its becoming conscious of what it has already been.³³

Whilst it is not my intention to over-simplify and dismiss Hegel's notion of World-spirit, it is possible to read its role in the above passage as functioning in a similar, but more expansive way, to the notion of background. This is particularly so when we remind ourselves that Marcuse himself has no intention of eventually asserting the ontological presence of an all-knowing cognitive substance. In claiming that consciousness is always "...dependent on the stage attained by the 'process of coming to self-consciousness of World-Spirit,'" Marcuse can be read as making the general point that we are always thrown into a particular historical situation that determines the possibilities of our actions. However, whilst we always find ourselves immersed in a particular historical articulation this need not enslave us to that situation. Indeed, the historical situation we find ourselves in provides the possibility for us to individualise ourselves, to display ourselves, to appear anew. This is the case for all forms of individual subjects not just persons. However, Marcuse is not just saying that reason as a self-relating mode of life *is* reason because it comprehends that the "...basic structure of Life is a process of self-manifestation and self-assertion which is also one of self-motion and self-creation..." He is making the additional claim that Life as reason "...is a movement which absorbs back into its self-consciousness each determinancy of its 'existence' (*Dasein*) and which lets this happen as its own act."³⁴ In making this additional claim, we interpret Marcuse as stressing that reason *is* reason because it comprehends that it is characterised fundamentally by historicity not by knowledge. Whatever is disclosed by reason is possible because of reason's historicity, not its knowledge of reality in some *vorhanden* like way.

To suggest that reason *is* reason because it comprehends that it is characterised fundamentally by historicity rather than knowledge radically alters the tone of activity. It was argued in Chapters Four and Five that Marcuse understands historicity in terms of an unfolding of the

³³ Ibid., p.269.

self-consciousness within a Heideggerian kind of temporal structure. The actions of the self-consciousness take place and are coloured by a particular historical environment, in a manner that continues to embody the past in a very specific way. They continue to embody the past, because self-conscious being never acts in a way that presents an endless series of "nows". Rather, every action performed by self-conscious being is directed towards the future in a way that embodies its background articulation (world). To use an early example of Marcuse's, whilst a factory may appear initially as an entirely undisputed fact, with a little thought we soon realise this is not the case. For somebody unfamiliar with capitalist relations of productions it would appear "as an accumulation of stones, iron people etc." For the owner it would appear as "a source of great profit". For the traveller it would appear "as a disfigurement of beautiful scenery", and so on.³⁵ The effect of this is not only that the meaning of particular objects and actions can never be understood as atomised events, but also that atomised events are in-themselves meaningless. It is in this light we comprehend Marcuse's claim that the "... actuality of spirit depends on 'what it has already *become* or what it already is in-itself.'"³⁶ It is also in this light that we interpret Marcuse's presentation of reason as a particular mode of life characterised by historicity not knowledge. For Marcuse is not claiming that reason has full knowledge of the infinite number of individual pasts that are stretched into present and directed towards the future. He is not saying that reason as a mode of being knows itself and can direct its actions towards the future in a fully predictable and controllable way. What Marcuse is saying is that reason as a mode of life comprehends that the process of world creation is both an historical process and a process characterised by historicity. Reason's grasping of this process will have a considerable effect upon how life-forms characterised by reason display their care for their world and its social and political institutions. Finally it is through comprehending Life as this kind of process that reason as a mode of being both deobjectifies Life, and transforms its relation to the other, now grasped as world, into a positive relation.

The positive relation to the world is realized when self-consciousness has brought forward and has comprehended its world as its own act. "The world as intrinsically given" and "individuality that is for-itself" are no longer separate...Through the transparency and comprehension of its freedom and universality, this Life process which *attains* the unifying unity between self-consciousness and the world is essentially distinguished from that which *initiated* it, namely, lordship and bondage.

³⁴ Both quotations in this paragraph from H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.272.

³⁵ H.Marcuse, 'On The Problem Of The Dialectic', op.cit., pp.19f.

³⁶ See previous quotation from *Hegel's Ontology*, p.269.

When the world in which self-consciousness exists as an other and which is an object in relation to this self-consciousness, has been generated and comprehended as an actual deed of self-consciousness, Life can find fulfilment as infinite self-sameness in otherness...Life thereby actualizes the highest movement of being-by-itself: "emerging into movement," it is not "lost" but remains within its own "distinction".³⁷

7.3. Observing Reason and The Fact of the Matter: Further Moments in the Deobjectification of the World Through Work

Hegel describes the historical process by which the self-consciousness is transformed into a positive relation to the world in the section of the *PhG* entitled "Observing Reason".

Observing Reason presents two significant aspects that are involved in the process of deobjectification. First, Observing Reason involves the transformation of the meaning of work from the actions of individuals to an intersubjective process that constitutes or shapes the world. Benhabib describes this aspect of deobjectification of the world in the following words.

This must be a world that individuals can recognise as their own "work," and in so doing recognise themselves in this world. But this recognition cannot consist in the mere certainty of a single individual that this happens to be the case... the mere certainty of self-consciousness merely continues the dialectic of intention and consequence. I may be certain that my work, my objectification in the world, stands for such a meaning and that the true intention of my actions is thus and not otherwise, but my certainty is merely pitted against those of others that this is not as I see it but otherwise. How can we generate intersubjective agreement and understanding that these objects stand for these meanings or are to be utilised in such and such contexts and that these acts embody these and not other intentions?³⁸

The second aspect of deobjectification that we need to note can be seen as the answer to Benhabib's final question in the above passage. The kind of intersubjective agreement that enables world-shaping to take place -that establishes a unity amongst different selves - involves disclosing that the world itself functions as a subject: the unity of selves is to be found in Life as a living subject. This is to say that Life, through its actualisation in distinct worlds, is itself a form of articulation that has the character of a living subject. Hegel refers to this as the *Concept*. Marcuse brings out this second aspect of deobjectification in the following passage.

³⁷ Ibid., p.273.

³⁸ S.Benhabib, *ibid.*, p.xxviii.

Observing reason actualizes a *positive* relation between self-consciousness and the world through knowledge, for it sublates objectivity as "essence and in-itself." It recognizes "things" as mere "moments of difference" within the simple unity of law. The extensive differentiation that constitutes "the form of thinghood" is sustained, governed, and "comprehended" by the unity and universality of law. Observing reason discloses that the essence of thinghood is the realization of the "concept" which is a mode of comprehending being as well as the ontological form of this being. In this process, the form of objectivity, which always immediately faced self-consciousness as its "negation," is overcome.³⁹

The final section of this chapter will present Marcuse's interpretation of Life as both the cycle of intersubjective work, and as a living subject.

In his continuation of accounting for the deobjectification of the world (which Marcuse claims is a presupposition for the mode of life that he is calling freedom) Marcuse now addresses the character of the activities inherent within observing reason. This involves both the characterisation of self-consciousness as an active (*Tun*) being, and the characterisation of the activities of self-consciousness as world-shaping. It also involves explicating a form of articulation that "has its beginning and end, its meaning and purpose in the activity of self-consciousness..."⁴⁰ In revealing this kind of action Marcuse is concerned to examine a mode of being that is self-reflexive and self-contained, a mode of being that takes delight and is fully sustained by its actions as pure activity, and as equality-of-self-in-otherness.

Action has, therefore, the appearance of the movement of a circle which moves freely by-itself in a void, which unimpeded, now expands, now contracts, and is perfectly content to operate in and with its own self.⁴¹

Marcuse follows Hegel in moving beyond these formal categories to reveal this kind of action in its determinate forms. Specifically, Marcuse continues his presentation of the deobjectification of the world through Hegel's concept of *work*, and the transformation of work into the "fact or heart of the matter". In this transformation, which involves in part a return to the struggle between distinct individuals, the self-consciousness grasps that the unity of the distinct aspects of freedom that were present, but disunited in the lord and the bondsman, are to be achieved by self-consciousness itself. It is through self-consciousness as reason that the distinct elements of freedom are united through the actualisation of the

³⁹ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, op.cit., p.270.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.278.

⁴¹ Hegel quoted by H. Marcuse, *ibid.*, p.279.

concept (initially presented as the "fact of the matter"). It is the concept that unites the distinct elements of freedom – being-for-self (independence, self-consciousness) and being-for-another (dependence, object-hood) – in a way that is directly attributable to the self-consciousness, but which is also objectively distinct from the self-consciousness.⁴² The concept for Marcuse is of course Life.

At its most general level Marcuse interprets work as what individuals attain in the living world. Work is the determinate and concrete activity that characterises and distinguishes individuals as individuals. Whilst it is a broader category than labor, work like labor is a determinate activity that expresses a freedom towards the world. Work is quite simply the activities that individual persons and societies engage in on a regular basis. It includes artistic, intellectual, sporting, and business activities etc., as well as the production of material needs and luxuries. Furthermore, it is through work that we actualise and express what most people continue to think of as their the inner self. On this issue Schoolman's analysis of Marcuse's concept of labour, both in *HO* and his later essay the 'Concept of Labor in Economics', is of relevance.

The concept of labor... must be rescued from the science of economics. Economics defines labor narrowly as *economic* activity, activity that is directly involved in the production of material goods. Politics, art, and intellectual effort in general do not meet this strict criterion for labor... Against the specialised conception of labor in economics, Marcuse expands the concept of labor to include all forms of human activity. In that way, labor can be related to all modes of social existence. Marcuse destroys the artificial economic boundaries of labor by giving it a philosophical foundation. More than simple economic activity, all labor has in common the property of "doing" (*tun*).⁴³

However, in opposition to Schoolman's position I have been arguing that Marcuse is not asserting that labour is the essential characteristic of human being in some naturalistic and dogmatic way. Rather, Marcuse interprets Hegel in a thoroughly ontological manner. Marcuse is claiming that in order for the world to be a world, then self-consciousness must necessarily have involved itself in this kind of labour. Furthermore, if self-consciousness is to mature into a free being it must grasp the world as its own "doing". Consequently, if freedom is to become the determining character of human life then human beings must continue to embody their labour in a plurality of cultural forms, and they must grasp the significance of their activity.

⁴² Ibid., p.284.

⁴³ M.Schoolman, *The Imaginary Witness*, op.cit., p.27.

Importantly, neither the fulfilment of the need of most individuals to express themselves through work, nor the actualisation of the individual through their work, can be completed in a single act. This is to indicate, once again, the temporal (historicist) structure of the self. Every form of action that we take in the world involves the continuation of taking up one's past through present actions that make sense in terms of the future. It is also to anticipate the meaningfulness of work in the lives of individuals. At its most fundamental level the expression of work is always the expression of an individual consciousness, despite the fact that work is always expressed within a social background. But more than this the expression of work, to be an expression at all, is both an external expression and a public expression. Indeed, Marcuse suggests that it is through the public character of work that the individual "becomes for all". Regardless, then, of the intentions of its authors, once work has been expressed it can no longer subsist for one, or several, individual consciousness' - it is available for all. Once work has been expressed it is public in the sense of being actualised in what Marcuse refers to as the universal medium, and also in the sense that it is *for* the universal consciousness. It is this dual character of work - the expression of individuality within the universal medium - that Hegel thinks creates an unsustainable tension. A tension that is only resolved by grasping that the meaningfulness of work lies beyond its determinate manifestations.

Marcuse interprets Hegel here as re-asserting the bondsman's insights that the freedom of labor is to be found in the process of formation. Additionally, this process of formation takes on an objective character that will itself lead to the deobjectification of the world in a way that does not dissolve into subjective idealism. The tension of universally expressing individuality is manifested at this level of self-consciousness through a combination of the fact that every other individual's work is alien, and that no individual wants their work interfered with. It is important to appreciate that the concept of work expressed here is applicable to all individual subjects, and that Marcuse and Hegel interpret these individual subjects to be persons, disciplines, nations, epochs etc. But why does the public expression of the work of individuals intent upon holding firm to the specific determinations of their work necessarily lead to a struggle against others? Why is it not possible for the individual self-consciousness to present their work publicly, and to delight in the plurality of other individual determinations of work? Or at least to tolerate, in the manner of liberalism, other expressions of work? Marcuse will argue that ultimately this is possible, but first another transformation of the subject needs to take place. This transformation involves self-consciousness grasping that the meaning of work is not located in its specific determinations. Until this transformation occurs individual self-consciousness will be unable to stand having their work altered, transformed, transacted and generally interfered with - going public will remain an unpleasant experience. A fundamental example of people's reluctance to have their work interfered with in this way is the general

lack of commitment and ability of people to converse in any other way than adversarial manner, i.e., in any other way than annihilating the person who interferes with what the "I" has expressed.

The protection of one's determinate work from interference and transformation re-creates a struggle between opposing individuals as they move towards defending and proving themselves against others. What's more this situation can not be solved simply by joining hands and declaring the need for greater tolerance and recognition of the other. For what Hegel is talking about is precisely the continuing process of establishing distinct kinds of recognition. Calls at this stage of the conflict for toleration and recognition simply beg the question. The outcome of the struggle itself will produce the solution, and as such the solution does not yet exist.⁴⁴

Hegel argues that the reluctance of individuals to have their work interfered with stems from their reluctance to accept that what is meaningful to them as a specific determination is nothing more than a vanishing moment. But Hegel further argues it is precisely the perishability of work that the self-consciousness must come to recognise as what constitutes its truth. For reality like conversation consists in the universal movement of transacting and transforming, not in what particular utterance is transacted and transformed. It is in the very vanishing of the determinate expression of work that work displays its permanence.

What preserves itself in the course of the vanishing work is universal, and the vanishing and transitory character of work reduces none of its essentiality and necessity, for action does not occur for the sake of some objective end in some or other objective world but it occurs because it constitutes the Being of Life which generates and discloses all reality with its own act.⁴⁵

But what is this unity that preserves itself in the face of the vanishing determinations of work? Marcuse suggests that it is "...neither work as distinguished from action nor the act itself alone but this unity constitutes the *true* object of work, namely, the "fact of the matter".⁴⁶ And it is in establishing the fact of the matter as unity that observing reason fulfils its role in the coming into being of freedom. Certainly observing reason still presents the fact of the matter in terms of various scientific laws – concerning such diverse regions as psychology,

⁴⁴ This point is what separates Hegel's approach from political contract theory. Following Rousseau, Hegel insists that all notions of an original or imaginary contract presuppose what the outcome of the contract is in advance, i.e., recognition of the other. For a useful comment in regards to how Rawls's 'theory of justice' is but the latest of this kind of political explanation, see F.Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics*, op.cit., p.58, n.30.

⁴⁵ H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, p.283.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.283.

physiognomy and phrenology – but in doing so, observing reason shifts attention away from the particular objective determinations that stand over the self-consciousness. The fact of the matter establishes the unity and truth of any given situation in the concept, the discipline or what I have been referring to as the articulation. Furthermore, it establishes that unity and truth is located in the articulation by grasping that the articulation is itself a subject. The articulation is the organic universal which, whilst it can never be reduced to its individual embodiments – the expressions of individual players – it also cannot be comprehended outside of these embodiments. Consequently, in the same way that the struggle between the lord and the bondsman served to destroy the power of the thing in a general sense, so too does the struggle to secure individual expressions of work destroy the power of particular objects of work. Observing reason contributes to the deobjectification of the world by establishing an objective reality, but one that can not be reduced to a particular determination.

Via the fact of the matter consciousness has become objective reality, and it knows its action to be the “substance” of actuality. At the same time, however, in the process reality is not dissolved into consciousness but remains an objective reality *for* consciousness. The fact of the matter is “an object born of self-consciousness as its *very own*, without thereby ceasing to be a free and actual object”.⁴⁷

For Marcuse each shift that has taken place in the struggle for self-consciousness to locate unity – now in objectivity now subjectivity, now in the thing, now in work – has had the effect of deobjectifying the world. The fact of the matter now opens up the possibility of uniting the distinct elements of freedom in a way that does not reduce one to the other, which does not reduce subjective independence to objective dependence or vice-versa.

On the one hand, Life is absolute negativity and freedom over and against all objectivity; on the other hand, ontologically Life exists “in an objective form”; it objectifies itself and its living world. For this reason the life process is at one and the same time objectification and the permanent overcoming and absorption of this objectification. The “fact of the matter” presents objectivity as well as sublation; it is an actual fact as well as being an object of consciousness. When Life has become “the fact of the matter,” it is immersed in truth and wholly by itself. Its real content not only is Life but is objectively present *qua* Life.⁴⁸

For Marcuse “the fact of the matter” functions somewhat like a discourse, a discipline, or a subject. It functions somewhat like Kuhn’s paradigms or disciplinary matrix or

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.284.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.285.

Collingwood's account of the interaction between the philosophic aspects of society and those involved in practicing the discipline. The fact of the matter is what unifies our practical involvements in the world. As has been noted in both Kuhn's and Collingwood's accounts, whilst there is a logical distinction between the philosophic and the practical both aspects must be seen as part of the same articulation. Significantly, for both Kuhn and Collingwood once a particular paradigm or idea takes hold it serves to both unify the particular individual works into a discipline, and also direct those works. As such the paradigm or idea can be said to function as both a universal and a subject. It is in respect to this kind of functioning at a general level that Marcuse suggests that "the fact of the matter", once revealed as Life, is to be grasped as the universal "substance" of beings. Life as the concept is the unity and the subject of all beings.

Marcuse argues that this process of unification and direction is a direct consequence of expressing ones work in a public realm with the intent of clarifying and contributing to the "fact of the matter". Every piece of work (publicly) expressed is as such thrown into the fray to be both disciplined, and to extend the discipline's subjective reach. Every new piece of work is seized upon in a frenzy – "others hurry along, like flies to freshly poured milk and want to busy themselves with it." It is in this way that the egotistical desires of being-for-self are harnessed, and the work of individuals are taken-up by the discourse itself; being-for-self is transformed into being-for-self-and-another. It is also in this way that the individual begins to recognise that the fact of the matter, the concept or Life is for *all*, not simply themselves.

When the individual, driven by desire to pursue its pure being-for-self, wants to prove itself in its own truth and when it is solely concerned with the "pure act," with pure self-display, then once more it experiences "that *all* others regard themselves as concerned and invited to participate, and instead of mere "doing" or separate action, particular to the individual alone, something is done which is just as much *for others*, something which is a common fact on its own account."⁴⁹

But even more than this, it is through expressing itself in work, and expressing work in a public or universal realm that the self-consciousness further breaks down the objectification of the world. For Marcuse, it is through the involvement of work within a particular background of concerns that the consciousness recognises its own actions as universal, and recognises that the "doing of each and everyone" actualises the paradigm, idea or matter at hand.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.286.

That it is neither merely something which stands opposed to action in general, nor to individual action, nor to action opposed to permanence ... Rather it recognizes [that this is – Tr] a reality whose *being* consists in the *action* of a single individual as well as of all individuals, and whose action is immediately *for others*; it is the "fact of the matter" and is such as only the *action of each and everyone*.⁵⁰

It is from this perspective –the "doing of each and everyone" – that the fact of the matter takes on a life beyond that of the individual actors. It takes on a life whereby the paradigm itself becomes both the substance and subject of the particular discipline. As such Hegel describes the fact of the matter as "simple category". For Marcuse this is the completion of Hegel's ontological principle that substance is subject and subject is substance,⁵¹ a process, which extends the principle of simple category, of specific articulations, grasped as moving pictures, to Life itself.

"The whole is self-moving, the permeation of individuality and universality", and as "self-moving," the whole exists only as process.

The whole which "exists only as process" is Life. More importantly Life has been revealed through an analysis of its distinct forms of self-consciousness to be Life as spirit. Life in all its distinct forms of consciousness and self-consciousness is revealed as Life fulfilling itself as spirit. In a similar way as an individual discipline can only develop into a discipline through the work or action of those involved in the discipline (and those involved become what they are through their involvement) Life develops as Life through individual modes of action. These modes of action are conceptualised in the distinct ontological modes of self-consciousness (now revealed as spirit). These ontological modes are not historical societies, but they reveal what is presupposed by historical societies to the extent that they are socio-political wholes, or what has been referred to throughout as worlds. Marcuse is in effect arguing that if one finds themselves involved in a particular kind of background then this background has emerged along the lines of an articulation – cultural formation. And all such articulations presuppose the ontological categories discussed.

Marcuse summarises and draws his conclusions in regard to the fundamental role of *action* in relation to Hegel's concept of Life in the following passage.

Precisely because the fact of the matter can be actualized only through the *action* of self-consciousness, because its "being" is none other than the "actuality as well as *action* of self-consciousness," the ontological character of truth is not one of mere

⁵⁰ Hegel quoted by H.Marcuse, *Ibid.*, p.286.

knowledge but also one of action. "The fact of the matter is therefore *ethical* substance." The consciousness whose actuality it is, for its part is true not with reference to pure knowledge but rather as active being. It is "ethical consciousness". Through the fact of the matter the realm of truth is disclosed to be the "realm of ethical being." This is the "absolute" dimension in which Life fulfils its ontological being...Nowhere in Western philosophy since the Greeks have Life and its activity and the world of Life as work and *pragma* been placed at the center of ontology.⁵²

In presenting Life's development as motility Marcuse has continually anticipated a specific mode of life which comprehends this process and whose own comportment, idea, or constitution reflects such comprehension. Marcuse follows Hegel in calling this ethical mode of life spirit. For Marcuse reason presupposes freedom and freedom in turn presupposes reason. Whilst, for Marcuse freedom's embodiment in specific socio-political institutions and practices, as an explicit principle, remains entirely anticipatory, this does not mean that we can know nothing of freedom. Simply because this mode of Life has not yet been actualised as an explicit social constitution it does not mean that it must remain as some form of ideal, or that it is an unrealistic fantasy. For the analysis of Life as a form of motility already has revealed precisely what this mode of life entails. Freedom reveals itself in reality as universality, as Being, as God, as Life. All individual forms of life presuppose the existence of freedom in order to have developed as historical entities. The political challenge is for historical and concrete individuals to explicitly embody freedom in their daily social relations. To grasp freedom in this way is to grasp Life as a universal ethical criterion that enables the happening of social diversity.

⁵¹ See R.Pippin on this point, 'Marcuse on Hegel and Historicity', op.cit., p.74.

⁵² H.Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, p.290.

Conclusion

Chapter Eight: Closing The Hermeneutic Circle.

8.1 Final Review

In the introduction it was stated that this study of *Hegel's Ontology* had three general aims. The first was as a vehicle that attempted to synthesise philosophical aspects of Hegel and Heidegger. As such Marcuse's text was treated as a pedagogical means of approaching three very complex thinkers, within the even more complex philosophical discourse of modernity; this Thesis was intended as the first cycle of what will enable its author to engage in future hermeneutical studies in philosophy - it is no more than a start. To this extent it was suggested that this study carried with it an existential or transformative dimension that mirrored the central claims made within the Thesis. This is to say that the foregoing study of *HO* is an *ab initio* attempt to practice philosophy in accordance with Marcuse's synthesis of Hegel's principle of subjectivity and Heidegger's process of hermeneutical destruction. It is an attempt to practice philosophy in terms of something like "coming to one's senses" (*Selbstbesinnung*). Second, this Thesis is intended to contribute to the contemporary debate concerning the perceived annihilation of diverse social life-forms through their assimilation into the capitalist process of globalisation. Specifically, having charged the process of globalisation as being predominantly characterised by terror, the question was raised as to whether there exists an alternative form of ethical action that is universal whilst also allowing for the continual happening of diversity. It was in relation to this question that the re-interpretation of Marcuse's early philosophical writings was presented as the third and central aim of this Thesis. In addressing Marcuse's early writings particular attention was directed towards the role of historicity grasped as a temporal structure. It was claimed that the role of historicity in Marcuse's work had been neglected by many previous commentators and critics. Indeed, this Thesis sought to differentiate itself by *sympathetically* raising the significance of both the theory of historicity, and Heidegger more generally, in regard to Marcuse's early work.

To some extent the success of all three of the above aims hangs on the perceived success of the foregoing interpretation of Marcuse to inform a 'concrete philosophy'. Whilst then, the central intention of this Thesis has been to examine what Marcuse's early writings claim to be the

foundations upon which a concrete philosophy needs to be built, the question of its capacity to function as a concrete philosophy can not be ignored. In this final chapter I will attempt to draw some conclusions regarding how the above interpretation of *HO* contributes to both a critique of socio-political life and what, for Marcuse, an authentic life of freedom would entail. This question, like all the preceding questions in this Thesis, will be approached from the perspective of constitution not causation. To this extent I will examine the correlation between critique, transformation, and authenticity (freedom) in Marcuse's later writings. Specifically, I will examine Marcuse's critique of one-dimensional society, the transformative role of the revolutionary subject, and the embodiment of unalienated freedom in the aesthetic dimension of life. The primary point I wish to make in this examination is that all three of these correlates are aspects of the same process, and as such they form the hermeneutical circle I have referred to as the principle of subjectivity. This chapter is not intended as a detailed reading of Marcuse's mature works but simply to indicate possible lines of continuity from his earliest to his final concerns. However, before commencing this sketch I would like to summarise, for the final time, the correlation between Life, historicity and spirit. This summary will in effect wrap up the final two chapters of *HO*.

In previous chapters I have detailed the ontological ambivalence that Marcuse finds between Hegel's early and later writings. I have argued that this leads Marcuse to re-interpret Hegel's early concept of Life as an alternative form of the Absolute to that which Hegel later presents as cognitive substance. For Marcuse, Life as the Absolute is an account of the ontological structure of existence. Life is what is presupposed in as much as anything is what it *is*. Life as universality is embodied in all forms of existence as change or motility. This is true as much for a stone as it is for a free historical subject. Marcuse argues that it is the manner in which this motility appears or is actualised that distinguishes one entity from another, one life-form from another. The specific manner by which motility appears in a distinct entity is its essence. To grasp a particular entity's essence is grasp the dialectical motility of that entity across time and space. Significantly, it is to grasp that the meaning of the present appearance of an entity can only ever be comprehended in relation to its past that is sustained in its present, and which directs its future. It is the specific motility of an entity grasped as essence, i.e., grasped as its complex multi-tense appearance, that Marcuse refers to as historicity. Historicity "...as process is characterized by the 'overcoming' (*Aufhebung*) which goes beyond the transcendence of

subjectivity and objectivity".¹ To grasp the historicity of an entity is to grasp its past, present and future directedness as a temporal structure that embodies motility. It is to grasp an entity as a unified whole in a way that cannot be satisfied by analysing it into a series of present moments. Nonetheless, it is to grasp an entity in a way where past moments are revealed as the presuppositions of the present and future.

In the case of the medium of temporality, these different aspects of movement are past, present, and future. These are not to be viewed as formal determinations, but rather as fulfilled shapes of time within which the totality of being moves. Time is what sustains itself as the same while flowing through differences. Time exists only as past, present and future, but is not consumed by any one of these distinctions. On the contrary it absorbs them and sublates them all in its unity, sustains itself as universal in them, and thus comes to pass.²

The specific historicity of a specific entity is the specific dialectical motility that any entity embodies. The specific historicity of an entity refers to the specific kind of entity it is, e.g., a plant is a temporal structure that embodies seed, blossom, fruit, perishing. However, whilst it is necessary for an entity, if it is to appear for *us* as an entity, to embody this kind of dialectical motility, historicity is not to be equated with the thing-in-itself. Historicity is not a univocal account of reality. Rather, the historicity of anything is constituted by interpretative acts performed by a particular kind of entity, i.e., spirit. Historical being "... is understood as a spiritual process, and the historical world as a 'spiritual' one."³ It is in this sense that Marcuse claims "... in its true actuality the totality of beings signifies Spirit and therefore only Spirit can be 'in time' and 'appear' in time."⁴

Does this mean that the meaning of all life-forms are dependent on, and emerge from the interpretive acts of spirit? And if so is this not the subjective idealism that I have suggested Marcuse and Hegel have continually resisted? To raise these questions is to once again direct attention to the tension that Benhabib identifies as running throughout Marcuse's text. If we accept a Heideggerian view that historicity derives from the temporality associated with Dasein's finitude (its being-toward-death), and Marcuse's assertion that spirit is itself a particular life-form, then how can historicity also be identified more generally with Life's objectifications? As Benhabib notes, Heidegger insists

¹ H. Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology*, p.320.

² *Ibid.*, p.302.

³ *Ibid.*, p.321.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.302.

that what is historical are not entities encountered in the world but rather that "entity that exists as Being-in-the-world". Certainly what Heidegger is aiming at is avoiding placing the character of historicity on either the subject or object pole; he is seeking to ground historicity in the temporality of *Dasein*, which itself can only be understood as a mode of Being-in-the-world. Nonetheless, it cannot escape our attention that, unlike Heidegger, nowhere in the present work does Marcuse explicate the structure of temporality unique to *Dasein*, and that the historicity Marcuse discloses in Hegel's work is an "objective" historicity, characteristic of all entities - of institutions no less than human beings- and that this historicity stands in sharp contrast to Heidegger's "subjective" or "existential" understanding of historicity.⁵

This sharp contrast should come as no surprise in the context that we have been interpreting Marcuse. From his earliest essays Marcuse identified an unacceptable subjective component in Heidegger's work, a component that Heidegger himself later sought to move beyond (see section 2.4). Paradoxically, and in contrast to Benhabib's reading, the question we are now addressing is whether Marcuse himself can avoid collapsing into subjective idealism, i.e., whether Marcuse can make good the distinction between Life and Spirit in the way that he intends. Whilst Marcuse's position is not without problems, especially of the kind that Benhabib points out, there are I think certain ways reducing the effect of these problems. In particular we need to maintain the distinction between causation and constitution. Certainly, Marcuse thinks the meaning of reality - the world - is constituted by the interpretative acts of spirit, but this is not to claim that spirit causes nature (understood as the other) to come into being in a spatial sense (see section 6.2). Rather, spirit animates the world through its constitutive acts, through the "we-like" process described in the previous chapter. In defining Life as not only motility, but also as the 'universal medium' in which this dialectical process is contained, Marcuse thinks the question of causation from the perspective of spirit, which is now seen to be the only perspective possible, is dissolved. Indeed, this seems to be the very point of the Doctrine of Being when viewed from the perspective of spirit - i.e., being can only ever be thought of and encountered as determinate being (see section 4.3). As such Life as universality can only ever be encountered by the self-consciousness as *this* or *that* particular life-form within a world. Significantly, as we have already seen, Marcuse insists spirit is itself a specific life-form that embodies the universality of Life not vice versa.

It is rightfully emphasised that *Spirit* becomes actual as *historical*... As the first form of actual Spirit, the people is distinguished from the last form of self-actualising Life as follows: the former exists in the freedom and transience of knowing activity, "as conscious ethical knowledge that is *for-itself* in its truth" and acts as the

⁵ S. Benhabib, *ibid.*, p.xxix.

true *subject* of this process, whereas the latter is only *implicitly* 'the fluid, universal substance' the 'universal medium' in which this process is contained.⁶

However, once spirit has emerged as a life-form the history of Life and the history of spirit become much more closely associated. The following passage indicates some of the difficulties that this association raises, it also indicates the presence of determinate being prior to spirit.

As Life, Spirit is intrinsically *motility*, when life becomes actual as a 'world' the history of life becomes the history of Spirit, and Spirit exists only within history. The question then arises as to how the history of Spirit distinguishes itself from the history of Life. Furthermore, in what does the process of Spirit consist if Spirit is complete actuality in which all that had to be externalised is already 'out' there?⁷

In the previous chapter I detailed Marcuse's answer to the second of the above questions. That is for Marcuse Spirit consists of a self-actualising, and self-conscious form of motility that comes into being through its transformative encounter with the other, and its return to itself. It was further argued that this process, i.e., the principle of subjectivity, is a social process. It has a fundamental 'we-like' character. Significantly this process has the effect of de-objectifying the world, it is a process of overcoming alienation. And it is in relation to the issue of alienation that Marcuse thinks the history of Spirit distinguishes itself from the history of Life.

It is this "alienation" (*Entfremdung*), this "proper externalisation and inessentiality (*Entwesung*) of self-consciousness" (PhG, 365), which Hegel treats as the proper history of Spirit, and far from being ahistorical this is a profoundly historical process.⁸

It is through this historical process, which Marcuse presents as a process of overcoming alienation, that Spirit not only distinguishes itself from the history of Life, but also creates a meaningful world.

Hegel summarizes the essential difference between the two [Life/Spirit -MC] with the statement that the shapes of Spirit are "distinguished from the previous ones in that they are *real* Spirits, true *actualities*; and instead of being mere shapes of consciousness, are forms of a *world*" (PhG, 330; 265. *Emphasis added.*). The essential difference rests then on the (hitherto briefly discussed) character of Spirit as actuality and as "world". The history of Spirit is the history of the actual world; the process of falling asunder (*Entzweiung*) and objectification exhibits itself "as a world articulated into (separate) spheres" (PhG, 331; 296). Its alienation as

⁶ Ibid., p.296.

⁷ Ibid., p.296.

⁸ Ibid., p.298.

well as its process of reabsorption back into itself (*Verinnerlichung*) represent real worlds. Real worlds clash with each other, dissolve themselves, follow each other, transact and transform each other. The history of Spirit is the history of the world in the true sense of the word.⁹

Marcuse seems to be claiming that the transition from self-consciousness to spirit marks the transition from the ontological to the ontic. The history of spirit is the history of real or actual ethical communities. It is the history of the plurality of ontic expressions. It is the history of the multitude of human cultures. It is the history of how different ethical communities have constituted their real worlds through their various interpretative acts, and in so doing externalised Life itself. "The world subsists and is real only through the knowing and acting self-consciousness whose 'work' it is."¹⁰ For Marcuse the history of spirit presupposes nature (the other), and that both spirit and nature presuppose the motility of Life.

In contrast the history of Life is the history of the organic development of the ontological structure that is presupposed by spirit. It is the history of subject as substance. In contrast to all univocal conceptions of reality Marcuse, following Hegel, is claiming that the ontological structure presupposed by all living beings is both substance and subject, and as subject has a history independent of spirit. It is this history, which Marcuse has presented as the motility of Life, that is both so radical and so difficult to grasp from a contemporary point of view. Certainly, it is a history told from the perspective of spirit, but it is a pre-spiritual history, and as such a pre-world history in the sense that Life is externalised in the history of diverse worlds but it not itself an effect of these histories. Life cannot be reduced to the history of spirit - "Historical Life is only a part of life in general. It is *human* Life; it is a context encompassing the human species."¹¹ Indeed, in relating Dilthey's debt to Hegel Marcuse concludes;

This concept [Life -MC] does not just circumscribe a specific mode of being or a specific region of beings; rather it orients the very meaning of Being in a certain direction which then remains decisive in the development of post-Hegelian theories of historicity.

For Dilthey, as a "fundamental fact," "life" is a category behind which we cannot regress; it is "not only the beginning point of the human sciences but of *philosophy* as well." As the "universal medium" and as the "all-

⁹ Ibid., p.299.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.300.

¹¹ Ibid., p.320.

present" substance" of beings, Life in its historicity becomes a problem. In the history of Life, actuality itself - and this means "nature" as well as "timeless" truths and laws of Spirit - is realized.¹²

When Marcuse draws attention to the fact that Life is a category behind which we can not regress he is not making the Kantian point that we cannot know the thing-in-itself. Rather, he is claiming that Life itself is a "fundamental fact" - there is nothing behind and nothing beyond Life as a fundamental ontological structure because Life grasped as this fundamental structure is not itself a thing (*Vorhanden*). Rather it is a concept, logos, it is God.

Whether Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel's ontology actually discloses this fundamental structure is no longer our concern. What is our present concern is to what extent Marcuse's political philosophy presupposes this kind of structure. To what extent do Marcuse's later writings continue to associate a certain form of spiritual life with the conscious re-enactment of this fundamental structure? And to what extent does Marcuse believe that this life-form is authentic and overcomes alienation? Specifically, this Thesis has interpreted *HO* as a continuation of Marcuse's early project that raised the possibility of an authentic historical subject grounded by the universality of historicity. What remains to be seen is whether Marcuse's first reading of Hegel is of use in interpreting his later political works, and whether we can make good the claim that his early philosophical writings provide, at least, a possible direction in which the establishment of a 'concrete philosophy' would need to move.

8.2 *One-Dimensional Man*

Marcuse's most well known and, for many, most notorious book is *One-Dimensional Man*. Kellner describes this book as a synthesis of the socio-political theories that Marcuse had been working on for decades. For Kellner, it is a book which combines aspects of Hegel, Marx, Freud, Weber, Heidegger and Lukacs.¹³ Likewise Katz describes *ODM*, and its central concept of 'one-dimensionality', in the following terms.

In fact, in this period of unsolicited international attention, Marcuse added almost nothing to the theoretical framework he had already constructed. His influence and notoriety came rather from his strategy of returning his abstract formulations to the concrete ground and underground of everyday life in the 1960's; speech,

¹² *Ibid.*, p.319.

¹³ D.Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse And The Crisis Of Marxism*, op.cit., p.229.

television, and sex, the shopping centre, the home, and the workplace, the restiveness of students, women and minorities.¹⁴

Whilst it is not my intention to give a detailed analysis of this book I would like to suggest that the concept of one-dimensionality, which originates in *HO*, may well function as the fundamental ethical criterion on which Marcuse's critique of advanced capitalism rests. Furthermore, it is an ethical criterion that derives its authority from the ontological structure that I have been detailing, and as such it will stand or fall with this ontology. It is also an ethical criterion that contains the assertion of one of the original problems raised and developed in this Thesis, i.e., differentiated unity. I will, then, begin this section with a statement that asserts the enduring presence of *HO* in Marcuse's critique of capitalism. I believe that the basis of this statement has been established throughout this Thesis. I especially want to re-emphasise Marcuse's notion of the absolute difference within being.

From the very beginning of *HO* we have seen how Marcuse claims the ground of the dialectic is to be found in the presentation of reality grasped as historicity. For Marcuse the dialectic is the essential ontological structure of reality, not simply an epistemological method. It is because Marcuse believes that reality has this dialectical structure that the only appropriate epistemological method is the dialectical method.

... the origin of the dialectic lies in being, in reality itself, the foundation of the dialectic lies in the historicity of being, of reality. Only because and insofar as the real is historical, it is dialectical: the real can and must be understood through the dialectical method.¹⁵

We have also seen how Marcuse, in concert with many Hegelian scholars, presents the spiritual dimension of the dialectic as the unfolding of the principle of subjectivity, i.e., as a process involving the transformation of the subject and the object (eventually understood as the world). It is in relation to this process that all of Marcuse's central concepts are grounded, e.g., freedom, authenticity, meaningfulness, culture formation, work. For Marcuse the dialectical movement of history, the process of world-shaping, is maintained through the power of negation, and through historical subjects that are characterised by an openness to the new. History is a process that entails both determinate negation and affirmation. History necessarily entails a particular kind of doing; *Wirklichkeit*, which is the embodiment of specific acts of interpretation. This is not to

¹⁴ B.Katz, *Herbert Marcuse And The Art Of Liberation*, op.cit., p.162.

claim that historical subjects necessarily bring about all of what they intend, but it is to say that the process of world-shaping necessarily involves the discovery of the new through both socially generated interpretative acts, and the negation or destruction of the old. To the extent that historical subjects comprehend that the world is animated by such acts, and embrace this process then they are free, authentic, and unalienated. Significantly, for Marcuse all this is dependent on what he refers to as the 'absolute difference within being': in order for the principle of subjectivity to get off the ground there must always be present both a subject and an other. Furthermore, a certain tension must always reside between the two. There can be no final identification of the two, nor can there be a subsuming of one into the other. For Marcuse the absolute difference between subject and object, subject and other, is crucial in the continual appearance and re-appearance of Life's multiple forms, i.e., in the movement from one reality to another reality. It is precisely the destruction of this dialectical process in the realm of spirit that Marcuse identifies as the effect of technological capitalism. And it is precisely the re-establishment of this difference that Marcuse identifies as the role of the revolutionary subject. And it is precisely the embracing of this difference that Marcuse sees as the essence of freedom as it is fulfilled in the aesthetic dimension of life. For Marcuse, the absolute difference within being, then, is not only descriptive and explanatory of the historical process, but it is also evaluative.

In a lecture series delivered in Paris in 1960 Marcuse gives a clear statement as to the defining character of one-dimensionality along these very lines.

A new monism has appeared, but a monism without substance. The tension between subject and object, the dualistic and antagonistic character of reality tends to disappear, and with it the "two-dimensionality" of human existence, the capacity to envisage another mode of existence in the reality... In the technological world, the capacity to understand and to live this historical transcendence is dangerously atrophied, man is no longer able to live according to two dimensions; he has become a one-dimensional being.¹⁶

For Marcuse the effect of this is the closure of historical possibilities. Future forms of human socio-political life are reduced to the present, understood in an abstracted single-tense way. The historicity of life is subverted.

¹⁵ H.Marcuse, 'On The Problem Of The Dialectic', op.cit., p.19.

¹⁶ B.Katz, *The Art of Liberation*, op.cit., p.164.

Today's novel feature is the flattening out of the antagonism between culture and social reality through the obliteration of the oppositional, alien, and transcendental elements in the higher culture by virtue of which it constituted *another dimension of reality*.¹⁷

The effect of this one-dimensionality is that a 'mechanics of conformity' spreads throughout society - a servitude to social control is established. Performativity or instrumental rationality overwhelms the individual, and regressively transforms the individual into nothing more than an administrable thing.

The world tends to become the stuff of total administration, which absorbs even the administrators. The web of domination has become the web of Reason itself, and this society is fatally entangled in it.¹⁸

Significantly, for Marcuse, technological capitalism tends to destroy the pre-technological character of the absolute difference within being.¹⁹ The other is no longer posited, nor recognised, as the other in a way that enables the transformation of the self and the world to take place. Hegel's principle of subjectivity is stopped dead in its tracks as all difference, which has previously manifested itself as antagonism, is trivialised out of existence. The continual renewal of spirit, which we have recognised from the beginning as contingent, ceases.

Hegel epitomised the idealistic ontology: if Reason is the common denominator of subject and object, it is so as the synthesis of *opposites*. With this idea, ontology comprehended the *tension* between subject and object; it was saturated with concreteness. The reality of Reason was the playing out of this tension in nature, history, philosophy. Even the most extremely monistic system thus maintained the idea of a substance which unfolds itself in subject and object - the idea of an antagonistic reality. The scientific spirit has increasingly weakened this antagonism. Modern scientific philosophy may well begin with the notion of the two substances, *res cogitans* and *res extensa* - but as the extended matter becomes comprehensible in mathematical equations which, translated into technology, "remake" this matter *res extensa* loses its character as independent substance.²⁰

¹⁷ H. Marcuse quoted by B. Katz, *ibid.*, p. 167.

¹⁸ H. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, Ark Books, London, 1964, p. 169.

¹⁹ Marcuse presents a condensed version of pre-technological ontology, which is essentially a condensed history of the role of the dialectic, in chapter five of *ODM*. I am arguing that Marcuse's point throughout is to stress the two-dimensionality of being, and its dependence on the absolute difference within being, in the historical process of world-shaping. To this extent chapter five, and the following two chapters that make up Marcuse's critique of One-Dimensional Thought, can be read as a concrete application of many of the themes developed in *Hegel's Ontology*. See, H. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, chapters five, six and seven.

²⁰ H. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, p. 152.

As such, Marcuse directly implicates the methodology and role of the physical sciences in the establishment of technological one-dimensionality. Furthermore, Marcuse claims that the correlation between the physical sciences and technological one-dimensionality, and the consequences of this correlation, involve an inability by the physical sciences to recognise their own pre-scientific structures. Marcuse charges that far from being 'value-neutral' and 'objective' these pre-scientific structures actually cause science to read into its project specific cultural and historical concerns. It is my view that all these charges stem from Marcuse's Heideggerian concern with the ontological. In order to add weight to this view I will now outline, in more detail, the link between Marcuse's ontology and his one-dimensionality thesis. The point I am driving towards continues to be that the basis of Marcuse's criticism of technological capitalism is its manifestation as an ideological interpretation of reality, and the repressive consequences of this interpretation in terms of closing-off historical possibilities, i.e., the reduction of reality to a single interpretative act, a single form of 'doing'.²¹

Marcuse acknowledges without reservation the validity of the knowledge that arises from the physical sciences. However, he insists that this knowledge is of a practical character, and like all bodies of practical knowledge has no absolute claim to truth -it is one practical body of knowledge among others. For Marcuse, scientific knowledge simply enables the exploitation of the physical world through its increasing ability to control and predict matter. The issue that Marcuse directs his criticism towards is the inability, or even refusal, of the physical sciences to recognise the extent of their subjectivity. This subjective component is understood by Marcuse in terms of certain pre-scientific presuppositions that have been present since Galileo's initial practical success.

But the scientific achievement referred back to a *pre-scientific* practice, which constituted the original basis (the *Sinnesfundament*) of Galilean science. This pre-scientific basis of science in the world of practice (*Lebenswelt*), which determined the theoretical structure, was not questioned by Galileo; moreover, it was concealed (*verdeckt*) by the further development of science. The result was the illusion that the mathematization of nature created an "autonomous (*eigenständige*) absolute truth", while in reality, it remained a specific method and

²¹ For a detailed account of Marcuse's analysis of Technology see, A. Feenberg, 'The Bias of Technology', *op.cit.*, pp.225-257. Also A. Feenberg, *Alternative Modernity*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1995, esp. ch.2.

technique for the *Lebenswelt*. The ideational veil (*Ideenkleid*) of mathematical science is thus a veil of symbols which represents and at the same time masks (*vertritt* and *verkleidet*) the world of practice.²²

Marcuse goes on to claim, in an explicitly Heideggerian way, that what shows up for the natural sciences, i.e., what the natural sciences "see", is only one of many kinds of being.

These central notions of modern science emerge, not as mere by products of a pure science, but as pertaining to its inner conceptual structure. The scientific abstraction from concreteness, the quantification of qualities which yield exactness as well as universal validity, involve a concrete experience of the *Lebenswelt* - a specific mode of "seeing" the world. And this "seeing," in spite of its "pure," disinterested character, is seeing within a purposive, practical context. It is anticipating (*Voraussehen*) and projecting (*Vorhaben*). Galilean science is the science of methodical, systematic anticipation and projection. But - and this is decisive - of a specific anticipation and projection - namely, that which experiences, comprehends, and shapes the world in terms of calculable, predictable relationships among exactly identifiable units. In this project, universal quantifiability is a prerequisite for the *domination* of nature. Individual, non-quantifiable qualities stand in the way of an organization of men and things in accordance with the measurable power to be extracted from them. But this is a specific, socio-historical project, and the consciousness which undertakes this project is the hidden subject of Galilean science; the latter is the technic, the art of anticipation extended in infinity.²³

The ideological aspect, which after all is the subtitle of *ODM*, and the political consequences of the dominance of this form of thinking is clear, for Marcuse.

...namely, the inherent limit of the established scientific method, by virtue of which they extend, rationalise, and insure the prevailing *Lebenswelt* without altering its existential structure - that is *without envisaging a qualitatively new mode of "seeing"* and qualitatively new relations between men and between man and nature.²⁴

In *ODM*, Marcuse will go on to give an account of how language is adapted to the operational needs of technological capitalism, and the role it plays in the neutralisation of critical reason. However, in so doing his point of critique remains the one developed in *HO*, i.e., the ontological structure of reality, grasped as the dialectical process of Life, can not be reduced to a specific socio-historical project. Yet, even if we are to accept Marcuse's bleak critique of capitalism questions arise as to whether and how the regressive destruction of spirit can be reversed. It is in relation to these questions that Marcuse's notion of the revolutionary subject is presented.

²² H. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, p. 163. The quotation marks and emphasis in this passage are Marcuse's and refer to Husserl's work.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

8.3 The Revolutionary Subject

In *ODM* Marcuse characterised technological capitalism as 'pleasantly repressive'. Advanced capitalism seems able to provide the material needs for enough of the working class to prevent growing impoverishment and social unrest. Politically this has the effect of integrating the working class to the extent of drawing their revolutionary potential into question. It is from this perspective that Marcuse insists that the re-spiritualisation of reality can only occur as a 'qualitative leap' by non-integrated 'outsiders'. In the more optimistic mood of *Counter-revolution and Revolt*, Marcuse describes this qualitative leap as a transformation of people's needs in a way that will redirect their world-shaping activities, i.e., the transformation of the self and social reality.

But what is at stake in the socialist revolution is not merely the extension of satisfaction within the existing universe of needs, nor the shift of satisfaction from one (lower) level to a higher one, but the rupture with this universe, the *qualitative leap*. The revolution involves a radical transformation of the needs and aspiration themselves, cultural as well as material: of consciousness and sensibility; of the work process as well as leisure. This transformation appears in the fight against the fragmentation of work, the necessity and productivity of stupid performances and stupid merchandise, against the acquisitive bourgeois individual, against servitude in the guise of technology, deprivation in the guise of the good life, against pollution as a way of life. Moral and aesthetic needs become basic, vital needs and drive toward new relationships between the sexes, between the generations, between men and women and nature. Freedom is understood as rooted in the fulfilment of these needs, which are sensuous, ethical, and rational in one.²⁵

Clearly, the satisfaction of these kinds of needs, and the actualisation of historical subjects that demand and direct themselves towards the fulfilment of these needs, is not simply a moral or internal concern. For Marcuse is not suggesting that these needs are the universal needs of humanity as a biological species. The point that Marcuse is making is that such needs do not even arise nor do they make sense to the limited selves of administrators or the administrated. He is suggesting they are the needs of a particular kind of subject, they are the needs of authentic and free subjects. This, however, does not mean that they are the needs of some kind of utopian subject who has not yet made its historic appearance. Certainly, the specific content of socialist life has not yet arrived on the historic scene. Nonetheless, for Marcuse, freedom in the form of the emergence of spirit within history, is able to be grasped through the kind of philosophical analysis and practice that I have been describing throughout this Thesis. It is precisely because

²⁴ Ibid., p. 165.

²⁵ H. Marcuse, *Counter-revolution and Revolt*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1972, p. 16f.

freedom is able to be comprehended through philosophy, and confirmed in certain autonomous social practices that Marcuse can claim to be tracking freedom's destruction in his analysis of one-dimensional society.

Freedom understood in this way is, then, not some kind of inalienable right, nor a given characteristic of human being. It is a social practice, an ethical comportment to the world, that develops within history. Freedom so understood is the constitutive comportment that certain kinds of subjects have towards the world, it is the essence of their individual and social constitutions, it is their historicity. It is a comportment that affirms and shapes the world through praxis, through human action, through 'doing'. As such, freedom can only be perpetuated by the free, and through the free's institutions and practices. If we want to know something of freedom we must interrogate the free. Finally, it is because freedom has its own history, and its own existential structure that is embodied in the process of world-shaping (i.e., within history), that we can potentially come to know freedom in the same manner as we come to know any other social practice (see Chapter 7). It is in regard to freedom as a practice that Marcuse claims that revolutionary activity has "...its roots in the whole *individual* and his need for a way of life in association with other free individuals, and in a new relation to nature -his own as well as external nature."²⁶

However, if Marcuse's thesis concerning one-dimensional society is correct it raises a point of extreme despair. For if every new generation within technological capitalism becomes more distant from the practise of freedom, and more enslaved by the processes of capitalism, then we also become less capable of understanding the problem raised by those who hang on to the fragments of a free life. If our very subjectivity has regressed to the consciousness of crude desire, and our social activities increasingly lose the creative impulse of even the bondsman, it is difficult to see how we could even embark on a process of social transformation?²⁷ Marcuse captures this despair by asking a haunting question which should be taken to be directed to all of

²⁶ H.Marcuse quoted by B.Katz, *The Art of Liberation*, op.cit., p.197.

²⁷ To this extent Marcuse can be seen to reinforce, and take to its conclusion, what many thinkers identify as 'instrumental reason'. Whilst the notion of instrumental reason is most often associated with the work of Horkheimer and Adorno there are many critical thinkers who have employed various forms of this notion; Aristotle distinguishes between *phronesis* and *techne*, German Idealists between *Verstand* and *Vernunft*, Weber uses the notion of *Zweckrationalitat*, Habermas *functionalist reason*, Lyotard *performativity* and Foucault *processes of normalisation* and the encroachment of a *disciplinary society*.

us. It should be taken to be directed to the administrators and the administered not to some enlightened political vanguard. It is a question we have already encountered.

... how can the administered individuals - who have made their mutilation into their own liberties and satisfactions and thus reproduce it on an enlarged scale - liberate themselves from themselves as well as from their masters? How is it even thinkable that the vicious circle be broken?²⁸

It is with this question in mind that Marcuse was continually on the look out for revolutionary subjects who could break this cycle, and transform both themselves and the social reality of administration. But who would qualify as revolutionary subjects, and what kind of activities would qualify as revolutionary? Paradoxically, as indicated in the above paragraph and as will be further developed in the next section, the answer to this question is in some sense those who maintain some vestige of freedom. Following Marx, Marcuse insisted that the needs of the revolutionary subject must be distinct from those of capitalism; "... the proletariat is the only class in capitalist society which has no interest in the preservation of the existing society."²⁹ Consequently, Marcuse also insisted that revolutionary subjects can not spontaneously emerge from social elements that have become thoroughly integrated components of capitalism. The transformation of the working class from a potentially revolutionary proletariat to relatively passive consumers caused Marcuse to look towards outsiders who would fulfil this role. Whether indeed Marcuse was justified to locate a revolutionary spirit in such social groupings as the student movement of the 60's, alternative life-stylers, indigenous populations, and undeveloped third world nations is not our concern here. However, as an unsupported claim it would seem that indigenous peoples around the world still constitute one of the few remaining qualitatively distinct forces of resistance against capitalism - i.e., they continue to express their needs in terms other than those manufactured by capitalism. This paradoxical connection between the necessity of freedom to be present in some sense in order for freedom to be actualised is captured by Kellner.

Concepts of liberation and utopia are, Marcuse deeply believes, integral parts of the revolutionary project which must offer a vision of a better way of life to attract people to radical politics and the struggle for radical change.

²⁸ H. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, op.cit., p.250f.

²⁹ H. Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1978, p.29.

Moreover, the new needs, values and consciousness must be present during the struggle itself to help prevent new forms of hierarchy and domination from emerging.³⁰

What then would these concepts of liberation and utopia, the *new* needs, values and consciousness involve? What would a 'radical act' by revolutionary subjects involve? To answer this question in terms of specifics is not possible for we can never know exactly how the *new* will be actualised. However, we can know what the *new* formally involves, and it is the emergence of *new* that Marcuse associates with freedom and revolutionary subjects. Marcuse makes a clear statement to this effect when characterising what he considers to be the authentic aspect of art.

Beyond this, a work of art can be called revolutionary if, by virtue of the aesthetic transformation, it represents the exemplary fate of individuals, the prevailing unfreedom and the rebelling forces, thus breaking through the mystified (and petrified) social reality, and opening the horizon of change (liberation). In this sense every authentic work of art would be revolutionary, i.e., subversive of perception and understanding, an indictment of the established reality, the appearance of the image of liberation.³¹

It is the form of the aesthetic dimension, the form of the new, and its relationship to freedom and reality that I will now address.

8.4 Freedom and The Aesthetic Dimension

Kellner suggests that Marcuse's theory of liberation opens up three specific areas where the *new* could be actualised; the convergence of art and technology; the emancipation of the senses; the cultivation of the aesthetic dimension.³² In this section I do not wish to examine the detail of Marcuse's theory of liberation, but rather to link it to his early writings. This will involve first the characterisation of the aesthetic dimension as the continual appearance of the new, as the continual transformation of the world in accordance with the aesthetic principles of the beautiful. Second, it will be argued that the aesthetic dimension should be seen as a paradigm for an unalienated social reality where difference is reconciled through recognising its life enabling possibilities, and not through its assimilation or annihilation.

³⁰ D.Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., p.329.

³¹ H.Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*, op.cit., p.xi.

³² D.Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism*, op.cit., p.329.

It has often been noted that at the end of his life Marcuse returned his thought to where it had begun, i.e., aesthetics. It has also been noted that in his final thoughts on this subject, *The Aesthetic Dimension*, Marcuse seemed to abandon the possibility of an ultimate harmony between art and reality - Marcuse seemed to abandon Hegel's identity theory, which had apparently informed some of his more utopian projections.³³ Indeed, Kellner states;

In *AD*, however, Marcuse no longer defends the power of art to redeem and 'cancel' evil, and he no longer posits the goal of an ultimate harmony, taking over instead Adorno's principle of the 'permanent non-identity between subject and object, between individual and individual', thus affirming Adorno's 'non-identity thesis' over Hegel's 'identity thesis'. Moreover, he no longer sees any possibility of the end of art, of art being sublated into reality; here he takes his aesthetic theory in a more pessimistic direction by denying the possibility of the reconciliation of instincts and society which he posited as an ideal in *EC*, suggesting instead that there can never be a condition of perfect social harmony that will not require art as the bearer of those truths, desires and hopes not realised in the existing world.³⁴

However, as we have seen in *HO* the concept of absolute difference within being (non-identity) is an intricate aspect of Marcuse's early account of reality, the dialectic, historicity, and world-shaping. And far from having pessimistic consequences, I have argued that Marcuse presents absolute difference as precisely what enables the formation of the subject and the world as an act of freedom. It is from this perspective that we can interpret Marcuse's notion of the aesthetic dimension as a realm of freedom and authenticity where spirit is truly reconciled with difference, but not identified with difference. This is to claim that for Marcuse reconciliation and identity are not the same. Indeed, it is through participation in life enhancing activities, which are all in their various ways encounters with difference, that transformation of human being and reality occurs; a transformation that Marcuse thinks can ultimately involve the recovery of the lost sensuousness of human life; a transformation of sexuality into Eros. Through this ontological transformation of human being from that which represses the sensuous and all that is beautiful into an aesthetic being that creates a reality of the beautiful, human consciousness is reconciled but maintains its difference from the other.

To this extent Marcuse's notion of an aesthetic dimension is not simply some kind of dressing up of our surroundings in a manner that becomes more pleasurable. When he talks about the

³³ Ibid., p.355.

aesthetic re-creation of reality he is not just talking about the creation of more parklands in preference to car parks, more architecturally designed urban spaces in preference to pre-fabricated boxes, more colourful murals on the walls of factories, or the like. Nor is he talking just about some kind of epistemological transformation, some kind of education and awareness of what the beautiful is. Marcuse is not just talking about the application of an alternative form of individual morality predicated in terms of the aesthetic. Rather, he is talking about all these things and more. He is talking about both a fundamental transformation of ethical consciousness, i.e., a transformation of how human subjects actually unify the world, and also about the transformation of the world, i.e. how the world shapes the subject. Marcuse clearly expresses this hermeneutical transformation of the subject and the world, the a background of the beautiful, in the following passage from *An Essay on Liberation*.

But instead of being shaped and permeated by the rationality of domination, the sensibility would be guided by the imagination, mediating between the rational faculties and the sensuous needs... The imagination, unifying sensibility and reason, becomes "productive" as it becomes practical: a guiding force in the reconstruction of reality - reconstruction with the help of a *gaya scienza*, a science and technology released from their service to destruction and exploitation, and thus free for the liberating exigences of the imagination. The rational transformation of the world could then lead to a reality formed by the aesthetic sensibility of man. Such a world could (in a literal sense!) embody, incorporate, the human faculties and desires to such an extent that they appear as part of the objective determinism of nature....³⁵

It is my position that when Marcuse talks about the aesthetic transformation of the world in a "literal sense!" he means it at a deep level that is often not appreciated. He means a transformation that goes beyond *all* facts, whether they be scientific, economic, philosophic, historic or whatever. Marcuse is talking about the rejection of any ethical form that has the effect of identifying human subjectivity to the authority of the fact. Furthermore, Marcuse's position has its origins in Hegel's rejection of the presuppositions of traditional logic (section 3.3), and Marcuse's rejection of Hegel's notion of Absolute Knowledge. It has its origins in Marcuse's belief in an ontology grounded on historicity. This transformation is realised through work and politicised through the 'radical act'. And for Marcuse authentic art embodies the radical act more adequately than any other act.

³⁴ Ibid., p.355.

³⁵ H.Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1969, p.30f.

I shall submit the following thesis: the radical qualities of art, that is to say, its indictment of the established reality and its invocation of the beautiful (*schöner Schein*) of liberation are grounded precisely in the dimensions where art *transcends* its social determination and emancipates itself from the given universe of discourse and behaviour while preserving its overwhelming presence...This experience culminates in extreme situations (of love and death, guilt and failure, but also joy happiness and fulfilment) which explode the given reality in the name of a truth normally denied or even unheard. The inner logic of the work of art terminates in the emergence of another reason, another sensibility, which defy the rationality and sensibility incorporated in the dominant institutions.³⁶

Marcuse unambiguously associates the power of art with the transformation of social, political, and historical realities. Consequently, Marcuse is not saying that a meaningful life is one that is modelled on the life of an artist and that we should structure our lives around the creation of beautiful objects. Well, he is not saying this if we understand the life of an artist simply in terms of some a talented person characterised by a creative flair who relates in some inner way to an already given world.³⁷ For this ultimately would collapse into the dualism he rejects, i.e. a subjective artist standing opposed to their artistic objects.

The truth of art lies in its power to break the monopoly of established reality (i.e., of those who established it) to *define* what is *real*. In this rupture, which is the achievement of the aesthetic form, the fictitious world of art appears as true reality.³⁸

Indeed, Marcuse is saying that artistic life is an analogy for Life itself. He is asserting that the unity of Life is not to be found in some underlying immutable principle that becomes known as realism, but it is to be understood in terms of a open-ended process or motility that it is reflected in artistic creation. He is saying that the artistic process of creating diverse realities or totalities (whether they be paintings, pieces of music, novels, poems or whatever) beyond the empirical present is a metaphor of Life itself.

The autonomy of art contains the categorical imperative: "things must change". If the liberation of human beings and nature is to be possible at all, then the social nexus of destruction and submission must be broken.³⁹

³⁶ H. Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension*, op.cit., p.6.

³⁷ The rejection of this kind of position is the theme of Marcuse's 1937 essay *The Affirmative Character of Culture*.

³⁸ *The Aesthetic Dimension*, op.cit., p.9.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.13.

These are not statements concerning the power of artistic fantasy to reshape the world at will. Rather, it is an account of the power of creative and interpretative acts to transform the world in accordance with social and historical possibilities; the theory of historicity continues to inform Marcuse's position.

Nevertheless society remains present in the autonomous realm of art in several ways: first of all as the "stuff" for the aesthetic representation which, past and present, is transformed in this representation. This is the historicity of the conceptual, linguistic, and imaginable material which the tradition transmits to the artists and with or against which they have to work.⁴⁰

What's more, it is a metaphor in which the dualism of subject / object is overcome by the artist's recognition that their created objects of beauty do not stand opposed to their subjectivity, but are a concrete realisation of their subjectivity; there is nothing the artist can find in her created work that is alien to herself.

The world intended in art is never and nowhere merely the given world of everyday reality, but neither is it a world of mere fantasy, illusion, and so on. It contains nothing that does not already exist in the given reality, the actions, thoughts, feeling, and dreams of men and women, their potentialities and those of nature. Nevertheless the world of a work of art is "unreal" in the ordinary sense of this word: it is a fictitious reality. But it is "unreal" not because it is less, but because it is more as well as qualitatively "other", than established reality. As fictitious world, as illusion (Schein), it contains more truth than everyday reality. For the latter is mystified in its institutions and relationships, which make necessity into choice, and alienation into self-realization. Only in the "illusionary world" do things appear as what they are and what they can be. By virtue of this truth (which art alone can express in sensuous representation) the world is inverted - it is the given reality, the ordinary world which now appears as untrue, as false, as the deceptive reality.⁴¹

Marcuse's notion of artistic creation functions as reflection of hermeneutical metaphysics. In the final analysis art not only represents the process of world-shaping, but locates the possibility of authentic and unalienated freedom in this process. Yet, this process is much greater than art.

There is in art inevitably an element of *hubris*: art cannot translate its vision into reality. It remains a "fictitious" world, though as such it sees through and anticipates reality. Thus art corrects its ideality: the hope which it

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.18.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.54.

represents ought not to remain mere ideal. This is the hidden categorical imperative of art. Its realization lies outside of art.⁴²

Finally, the social and political realisation of this categorical imperative is presented by Marcuse as the permanent non-identity of subject and object, as the absolute difference within being, whereby free individuals affirm the world and delight in the life enhancing presence of the other in a manner that is reconciled with the historicity of Life.

The permanent transformation of society under the principle of freedom is necessitated not only by the continued existence of class interests. The institutions of a socialist society, even in the most democratic form, could never resolve all the conflicts between the universal and particular, between human beings and nature, between individual and individual. Socialism does not and cannot liberate Eros from Thanatos. Here is the limit that drives the revolution beyond any accomplished stage of freedom: it is a struggle for the impossible, against the unconquerable whose domain can perhaps nevertheless be reduced...

But mere negation would be abstract, the "bad" utopia. The utopia in great art is never the simple negation of the reality principle but its transcending preservation (*Aufhebung*) in which past and present cast their shadow of fulfilment. The authentic utopia is grounded in recollection. "All reification is forgetting". Art fights reification by making the petrified world speak, sing, perhaps dance. Forgetting past suffering and past joy alleviates life under a repressive reality principle. In contrast, remembrance spurs the drive for the conquest of suffering and the permanence of joy. But the face of remembrance is frustrated: joy itself is overshadowed by pain. Inexorably so? The horizon of history is still open. If the remembrance of things past would become a motive power in the struggle for changing the world, the struggle would be waged for revolution hitherto suppressed in the previous historical revolutions.⁴³

8.5 Closing the Hermeneutic Circle.

I have argued throughout this Thesis that Marcuse's early philosophy is an account of reality as a hermeneutical process that combines Hegel's principle of the subjectivity with Heidegger's hermeneutic of facticity. In practical terms this does not mean we start from an idea, in this case freedom, and then set out to realise it. Nor do we use such abstracted ideas as the foundation for our critique of existing society. Rather, it is only after specific practices have already made their appearance that philosophical elements in society grasp what such practises entail and set about putting them on firm foundations, i.e., refining and directing their practical course. Whilst this dialectical process is extraordinarily complex, once it has been established it can be grasped as a

⁴² Ibid., p.57.

⁴³ Ibid., pp.72ff.

specific social history. And history can be grasped as a process within which the transformation of reality and the subject takes place. History in this sense involves at least the description of specific networks of effective relations (*ein Wirkungszusammenhang*) and a description of the life and passing away of these networks. To this extent all human activities including the physical sciences are historical constructs. This Thesis has been concerned not with any specific network of effective relations, which I have interpreted as ethical life-forms, but rather with what is presupposed by their very existence. It has been concerned with what kind of existential or ontological structure enables the continuous appearance of distinct ethical life-forms, and whether there is a particular life form that consciously re-enacts this process, and directs itself towards such a re-enactment, i.e., whose social practices are informed by such an ethos? I have suggested that Marcuse ultimately gives an affirmative answer to this question.

It is my position that Marcuse's critique of capitalism, his pre-occupation with revolutionary subjects, and his account of freedom are all part of his comprehension of reality as an historical process. And in this regard they all need to be grasped as aspects of the same holistic vision that this Thesis has attempted to re-present. I have argued that for Marcuse this vision involves several claims.

1. We can only ever encounter reality through the lens of an historical background.
Consequently, what we take to be reality at any specific time and place is in fact a world that has been animated by a constellation of social or cultural acts of interpretation. Reality as such can only ever be encountered as a social *world* grasped as the combined work of ethical communities.
2. Such cultural acts of interpretation are driven by an antagonistic separation between subject and object, self-consciousness and the other, self-consciousness and the world. This antagonistic separation, which Marcuse refers to as the absolute difference within being, is initially encountered as alienation.
3. Once self-consciousness as spirit grasps that the world and its entities, including other forms of spirit, are of its own making, then it is possible for self-consciousness to overcome alienation. This process of 'coming to one's senses' remains for Marcuse a philosophical project. However, if this historic process is to continue, then the antagonism between spiritual life-forms and the other can not be eliminated by reducing one to the other. I have argued that

Marcuse charges not only Hegel's notion of Absolute Knowledge, but also the physical sciences with this kind of reduction. Indeed, following Heidegger, Marcuse thinks that there is a tendency towards this reductive process in all socio-political structures to date (albeit an historical tendency not an ahistorical ontological characteristic). For Marcuse, part of philosophy's role is the hermeneutic destruction of such tendencies through the de-objectification of the world, and consequently the re-establishment of an affirming comportment towards the other. Significantly, this de-objectification of the world can only takes place as a social act, i.e., as cultural formation. It is a transformation of both the consciousness and the external world.

4. Consequently, if alienation is to be overcome whilst preserving individual subjectivity, then it can not annihilate the source of that subjectivity. For Marcuse any attempt to overcome alienation must recognise the fact that it is the presence of the other - the absolute difference within being - that enables a subject to become a subject, and identifies one subject from another.
5. As such freedom becomes associated with this transformative process, free subjects become associated with active subjects who bring about transformation. Such freedom is also authentic, if it self-consciously re-enacts and embraces the original historic and interpretative process that gives rise to the problem of alienation in the first place, i.e., difference. Authentic freedom does so in a manner that closes the circle and redefines the other through such categories as love, mystery and concern rather than hatred, objectification and annihilation.
6. It is from this perspective of freedom that Marcuse's critique of capitalism is directed. To the extent that capitalism, or any other social form, is characterised by either the alienation of individuals or their destruction through the destruction of difference, then such social forms are characterised as oppressing freedom and happiness. Of course the complexity of any oppressive social form means that both these regressive aspects (and more) will present at the same time. To the extent that a particular act transforms social reality - the world - and makes its historic contingency apparent, i.e., demonstrates that the world can be other than it *is*, then such an act is a radical act. To the extent that particular historical subjects are directed towards subverting oppressive socio-political structures through consciously performing radical acts, then they are revolutionary subjects. To the extent that historical subjects delight in difference, within associations of different individual subjects, in a manner that

reciprocally recognises each other as different, and where all associates are directed by an ethos of becoming, then they are free. And of course any ethos of becoming entails an ethos of giving-up.

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